THE BOOK-METHOD OF BIBLE STUDY

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THE BOOK-METHOD OF BIBLE STUDY

INTRODUCTORY

The best method of the study of any organism is that which gives due prominence to the structure of that organism. The Bible is a living organism of truth; it has in it the life of the living God, and is able (as no other book is) to impart spiritual life to the soul of man.

The Bible was made bookwise—one book at a time, according as the need for the truth, historical, prophetical or ethical, as set forth therein, arose.

It would seem reasonable, therefore, to assume that the BOOK-METHOD OF BIBLE STUDY should yield the best results from time and labor spent in an endeavor to "search the Scriptures."

Of course it is true that there is a general view of the Bible which one should have even before the particular view of any one book. This is assumed; but such a view is only preparatory for that better, yea, best method, namely, the BOOK-METHOD OF BIBLE STUDY.

Ephesians has been chosen as the best book with which to begin and illustrate the BOOK-METHOD OF BIBLE STUDY, not only because it lends itself easily to the method, but also because it contains the deepest truth in the whole of the New Testament. The student, therefore, will be feeding the heart as well as the head, and will find spiritual help and inspiration for the duties of daily life as well as the acquisition of a scriptural knowledge of God's plan and purpose for the Church in this age and that which is to come.

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS

I. READ THROUGH AT ONE SITTING THE ENTIRE BOOK YOU ARE STUDYING.

This task does not take as much time as one might imagine. Seventeen of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament can be carefully read in less than half an hour each; five (Romans, Corinthians, Hebrews, Revelation) in one hour each; and the historical books as follows: Matthew, two hours; Mark, one hour and a quarter; Luke, two hours and a quarter; John, one hour and three quarters; Acts, two hours and a quarter. Without this continual reading it is impossible to get the general thought of the book you are studying.

In this general reading through of the book, your purpose is not to analyze, nor is it even to get an outline, but to get an impression; therefore, pay no attention to chapter marks. One is sometimes hindered in Bible study by stopping at the end of a chapter. For instance, John 7 ends with the words: "And every man went unto his own house"; 8:1 reads: "Jesus went unto the mount of Olives." Now suppose we end with the first clause, have we not stopped in the midst of a beautiful thought? The thought is this: That while every man had his own home to go to, that while the foxes had holes and the birds of the air had nests, yet Jesus had no place to call His own, so He went to the mount of Olives. To obviate this difficulty it is good to read in the Revised Version.

II. READ THE BOOK OVER AND OVER AGAIN.

In the second reading of the book you will see things that you did not see clearly, if at all, in the first reading. What at first sight was dim and misty will, in the third or fourth reading, begin to assume clear and definite outline.

A careful and repeated reading of the Gospel of Matthew, as here suggested, reveals the fact that it has a threefold division, each introduced by the words, "From that time Jesus began." Reading up to 4:17 we come to a point which marks the first division from the second: "From that time Jesus began to preach." These words are an indication of the outline of the book: (1) Jesus' Period of Preparation, 1:4-16; (2) Jesus' Period of Evangelistic Effort, 4:17-16:21; (3) Jesus' Period of Passion, 16:21-28:20, indicated by the words, "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that . . . he must suffer." This brief outline is sufficient to illustrate the great advantage of the continuous reading of the book under study.

III. READ THE BOOK PRAYERFULLY.

Remember that the Bible is in a very real sense no ordinary book. It is an extraordinary production; it is a supernatural work. The Spirit of God inspired its writers. The same power must illumine its readers if they are to understand its meaning. We ought never to attempt the reading of God's Word without the prayer of David in our hearts: "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." (See 1 Cor. 2:9-16; Isa. 29:10-12.)

IV. READ THE BOOK WITHOUT THE USE OF ANY HELPS.

This does not mean that we are to despise or lightly esteem all that God has said to the race through godly men. But we must allow the Bible to speak for itself. If we read more of the Bible and less of the human criticism and even suggestion that has been allowed to throw its shadow over the pages of Scripture, we shall come to a deeper and more satisfactory under-

standing of the mind, will and purpose of God as revealed in His Word.

A mine of wealth is revealed by a study of just the references in the margin of the Bible. Harrington C. Lees, in his book, *The Joy of Bible Study*, gives a striking illustration of the helpfulness to be found in the reference column of the ordinary Oxford Bible, and the wealth of material one can get by studying the Bible without outside aid at all. Take Romans 12:2 as an illustration: "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." If the Revised Version is consulted, "conformed to this world" is slightly changed to "fashioned according to this age"—suggesting the danger of always trying to be "up-to-date." The words "that good and acceptable," are altered to "the good and well-pleasing" will of God—setting forth the pleasant character as contrasted with the galling nature of that will, so that it is something one can welcome and desire. Three groups of references are then found in the column. Those referring to the first clause of the verse, "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed," show us the contrast between the past when we did our own will, and the present when we do the will of God (1 Pet. 1:14): and sets before us a warning to the effect that the way of the world and the way of God do not run parallel for long (1 John 2:15). The second clause is then taken up: "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." The manner in which the exhortation is to be carried out is portrayed by references to Ephesians 1:18, showing that the spiritual renewing is from above, and that its attainment is a continual process as well as an initial crisis (Col. 3:10). The third clause,

which may be called the goal of the exhortation, "That ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God," is explained by three references showing (a) that we need an intelligent view of the will of God (Eph. 5:17); (b) that this will is to be referred to constantly as umpire of all actions (Eph. 5:10); (c) and that its end and aim are to lead to a life of deeper consecration to God (1 Thess. 4:3). This is but an illustration of the abundant wealth of exposition that one can get from the Bible itself without referring to any outside help. We are in great need of more of this kind of Bible study—the study of the Book itself, and not books about the Bible, good as these are in their place.

V. SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDY OF THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

1. Begin by reading the epistle through three times at one sitting, making no special effort to do anything more than catch the author's spirit and the drift of his argument. Read now for general impression only.

2. Read the book through the fourth time carefully and thoughtfully for the purpose of finding out and classifying questions of introduction, such as, Who wrote the book? Why was it written? What was the character of the people to whom it was written? When was it written?

Have by your side as many sheets of paper as there are questions of introduction. Write a headline on each sheet, viz.: On sheet 1—The author: who wrote the book; sheet 2—The persons addressed: to whom written; sheet 3—When written; sheet 4—Why written?

Now begin to read the text carefully, prayerfully, and thoughtfully. Chapter 1, verse 1, gives us two

points—the author of the book, and the persons addressed. Now write down on sheet 1, "Paul, 1:1"; and on sheet 2, write "the saints which are at Ephesus, and the faithful in Christ Jesus, 1:1." Reading on further you find something else to write on sheet 2. The persons addressed were "Gentiles, 2:11; 3:1, 6, 8; 4:17"; "formerly living in lust, 2:2, 3"; "formerly in darkness, 4:18; 5:8."

Read through the epistle with these questions in mind, and whenever an answer occurs, write it down on its respective sheet, giving the words of the text, and the exact reference.

The final result will be somewhat as follows:

Sheet 1

The Writer.

Paul, 1:1; 3:1; 4:1; 6:20.

Sheet 2

The Persons addressed—to whom written?

The saints which are at Ephesus, and the faithful in Christ Jesus, 1:1.

Gentiles, 2:11; 3:1, 6, 8; 4:17;

Formerly lived in lust, 2:2, 3;

Formerly lived in great darkness, 4:18; 5:8;

Now one with Christ, 2:1-6;

Made nigh to God with Christ, 2:13;

Fellow-heirs with the Jews of the blessings of the Gospel, 3:6;

Some were Christian slaves, 6:6-8;

Others were Christian slave-holders, 6:9.

Sheet 3

The Time of writing—when written?

When Paul was a prisoner at Rome, 3:1; 4:1; 6:20.

NOTE—This imprisonment was known as the first imprisonment, and lasted two years, A. D. 61-63. (See Acts 28.)

Sheet 4

The Purpose of writing—why written?

In general: To give to the Ephesian church a clear knowledge of their position and standing in Christ:

That they might know the hope of their calling, the power of God, and His glory, 1:17-21; 3:20.

A warning not to go back again to their former low level of life, 2:1-3, 11, 12; 4:17-32; 5:1-13.

Exhortation to develop love in the heart to Christ, and to each other, 3:18, 19; 5:2.

A plea for harmony and unity between Jewish and Gentile Christians, 2:20-22; 4:3-16.

To set forth the true idea of the various relationships of life, such as husband and wife, parent and child, master and servant, 5:21-6:9.

These illustrative sheets are by no means exhaustive. They simply show how to apply the method, which the student can enlarge upon individually.

3. Look for the general outline, division, or plan of the book.

This is comparatively easy with regard to most of the epistles of Paul, for they usually fall into two main divisions: the doctrinal, and the practical. Such is the general outline of Ephesians. Chapters 1-3 present the doctrinal part; chapters 4-6, the practical part. In the first part the apostle dwells exhaustively upon the calling, standing, nature, and position of the Christian Church; in the second, he admonishes the members thereof to walk worthy of so high a calling, and gives practical illustrations how to conduct themselves in the various walks of life.

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

INTRODUCTORY

The Deepest Book in the New Testament.

It is so conceded. Deeper, for example, than the Romans, for in Romans 16:25, the fact of a mystery is stated but not explained, while in Ephesians 3:3-13, this mystery is discussed and explained. This epistle scales the loftiest heights and sounds the lowest depths of Christian experience. It is an "afternoon letter" of the apostle, and is characteristic of the meditative period of his life. It is the Alps of the New Testament.

It is an Epistle of "Inness."

The words "in him," or equivalent, occur over twenty times. "Ephesians contains as no other epistle does the apostle's deep and profound conception of his vital union with Christ which was the deepest fact in the religious consciousness of Paul. The saints are regarded as *solidaire* with their Lord in respect of inseparable interest, holy dearness, and one-ness of spirit."

I. THE WRITER OF THE EPISTLE.

Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, while a prisoner at Rome (1:1; 3:1; 4:1; 6:20).

The bearer of the letter was Tychicus (6:21, 22).

Paul's relation to the Ephesians: He visited Ephesus on his second missionary journey (Acts 18:18-21), bringing Aquilla and Priscilla with him, and leaving them there. He stayed probably but one Sabbath at this time (Acts 18:19, 20, 21). He visited Ephesus again on his third missionary journey (Acts 19:1-8), and abode there about three years

(Acts 20:31), probably 54-57 A. D. On his last journey to Jerusalem before his imprisonment (58 A. D.). he called for the Ephesian elders to meet him at Miletus, where he delivered his final and stirring charge to them (Acts 20:17-38).

II. WHEN AND WHERE THE EPISTLE WAS WRITTEN.

Doubtless at the same time as Colossians and Philemon, inasmuch as Tychicus accompanied by Onesimus was the bearer of both the Colossian and Ephesian Epistles (cf. Col. 4:3, 10, 18; Phile. 1, 9, 23; Col. 4:7, 9; Phile. 11, 12; Eph. 6:21, 22). Date 61-63 A. D. while Paul was a prisoner at Rome (Eph. 3:1; 4:1; 6:20).

III. WHY THE EPISTLE WAS WRITTEN.

1. To give the readers a deeper knowledge of their high calling in Christ Jesus, and the eternal purposes of God for them. (1:15-23; 3:14-20.)

2. To warn them of impending dangers. Two dangers seemed to threaten the Church at Ephesus:

a) That it should step back again into the lower moral standing of their surrounding heathen neighbors. How vividly all this is portrayed (cf. 2: 1-3, 11, 12; 4:17-32; 5:1-13)! By referring to Revelation 2:1-7, it would seem as though the apostle had not exhorted in vain.

b) The want of unity between the Jewish and Gentile Christians. With what sublime grandeur does the apostle portray the Church as "one body" of which Christ is the Head (chap. 4)!

Some writers have thought that there was no specific purpose in the apostle's mind; that the letter was not written to protest against any impending error, or exhort to any lacking virtue, but was designed "to set forth the origin and the development of the Church

of Christ, and to display to the dwellers under the shadow of the great temple of Diana, the unity and beauty of that more transcendently glorious temple of which Christ Himself was the chief cornerstone, and the saints portions of the superstructure" (2:19, 20).

—*Ellicott.*

IV. ITS RELATION TO OTHER BOOKS IN THE BIBLE.

1. To Colossians.

Colossians and Ephesians are companion epistles (cf. Col. 4:16). In Colossians Christ is the Head of the Body, the Church; in Ephesians the Church is the Body of which Christ is the Head. In Colossians Christ, in Ephesians the Church, is the theme. In Colossians Christ is the fullness of the Father for the Church (2:9); in Ephesians the Church is the fullness of Christ for the world (1:23). In Colossians Christ is the Creator of the universe; in Ephesians He is the Head of all things to the Church. Colossians is argumentative; Ephesians is meditative. The keynote of Ephesians is "in Him"; of Colossians "through us." Colossians was written to attack existing error; Ephesians to prevent error. These parallels of thought can only be understood by a careful comparison of these two epistles; they are complementary to each other (Col. 4:16). Together they make up the grand complex: "I am the vine, ye are the branches; abide in me, and I in you."

2. To Galatians.

Galatians deals with the salvation of the individual (2:20); Ephesians with that of the Church (5:25) —individual versus collective salvation. Galatians is polemic—the apostle seems to be boiling over with righteous indignation, he is in fighting trim. In

Ephesians he is like the sweet psalmist of old leading us beside "still waters, and pastures of tender grass," peaceful and irenic. From the roar of the battlefield (in Galatians) we step into the hush and silence of the temple (in Ephesians).

3. **To Romans.**

The justification of the saint is the theme of Romans; in Ephesians the saint finds his life and union in and with Christ the living Head from all eternity.

4. **To 1 and 2 Timothy.**

Both these epistles are letters to the church at Ephesus. Timothy was pastor there. If Ephesians sets forth the *inner life* of the Church as an organism, the letters to Timothy set forth the Church as an *outer organization.*

5. **To the Letter to the Church at Ephesus (Rev. 2:1-7).**

Is it a coincidence that this church, which was so strong in love and was so earnestly exhorted by the apostle to continue to grow in that grace (3:17-20), should have, as the sin laid to its charge, that it had "left its first love" (Rev. 2:4)?

6. **To the charge to the Ephesian Elders at Miletus (Acts 20:15-38).**

Many and instructive lessons may be learned by a comparison of these two portions of the divine Word.

7. **To the Epistles of Peter.**

These letters compared with Ephesians set forth a double aspect of the life of the believer: Ephesians sets forth the believer as seated in *heavenly places* with Christ Jesus; Peter, as a pilgrim and a stranger *on the earth.*

8. To the Old Testament.

It is interesting to note the quotations from, allusions and references to the Old Testament as found in this epistle. They are especially helpful when we consider that this church was composed of Gentiles largely (which was true of all the Asia Minor churches). This shows what importance the apostle laid on the study of the Old Testament as the Word of God. Compare Genesis 2:24 with Ephesians 5:3: Exodus 20:12 with 6:2; Psalm 4:4 with 4:26: Psalm 8:6 with 1:22; Psalm 68:18 with 4:8; Psalm 118:22 with 2:10; Song of Solomon 4:7 with 5:27: Isaiah 57:19 with 2:17; Isaiah 60:1, 51:17 and 52:1 with 5:14.

THE STRUCTURAL OUTLINE OF THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

Introduction: Apostolic greeting and salutation, 1:1, 2.

A. THE DOCTRINAL PART OF THE EPISTLE—SETTING FORTH THE DIVINE CONCEPTION OF THE CHURCH, AS MANIFESTED IN ITS DIVINE CHOICE, CALLING AND NATURE, Chapters 1-3.

In this division the Church is set forth as an invisible organism which God especially (and probably alone) sees.

I. THE DIVINE CONCEPTION (OR THE CREATION) OF THE CHURCH, Chapters 1-3.

1. The conception of the Church from the divine side: the Church in the mind of God, 1:3-14.

Just as the plans and specifications of a building are

in the mind of the architect before a single stone is laid, so the Church was in the mind of God from all eternity, even before one living stone was laid upon another. This conception of the Church from the divine side takes the form of a hymn of thanksgiving consisting of three stanzas addressed to the Trinity with reference to the work of redemption:

a) Thanksgiving for the spiritual blessings given to the whole Church.

These blessings are summed up, as it were, in a hymn of three stanzas, each ending with the same refrain, and representing the work of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost:

Predestined by the *Father,* who chose us to be sons, holy and without blemish, before the foundation of the world, *for the praise of the glory of His grace,* 1:4-5.

Given in *Christ the Son,* conveying redemption, forgiveness, knowledge of God's universal purpose for all creation, and inheritance among the saints, *to the praise of His glory,* 1:6-12.

Sealed, first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles, by the *Holy Spirit,* as an earnest of the complete redemption which lies in the future, *for the praise of his glory,* 1:13, 14.

It is well to take special notice of this hymn of praise, setting forth so beautifully and so completely the work of the Trinity. Paul evidently had the logical order of the work of redemption in his mind when he thus wrote. Under this heading note further:

1. *The nature of that choice and calling.*

Eternal, before the foundation of the world, 1:4; 3:9.
Wise and prudent, 1:8.

Free and gracious, according to the good pleasure of His will, the result of deliberate beneficent resolve. 1:5, 9, 11.

Originated in the good will of God Himself, 1:5. 9, 11.

Originated in the riches of His grace, 1:7.

2. *The purpose of that choice and calling.*

To the adoption of children, 1:5.

To acceptance in the Beloved, 1:6.

To holiness and blamelessness of life, 1:4.

To the magnifying of God's grace, 1:6.

To complete the exaltation of Christ, 1:10.

3. *What the divine choice and calling includes.*

Redemption through the blood of Christ, 1:7.

Forgiveness of sins, 1:7.

Bestowment of all needed spiritual blessings, 1:3.

The knowledge of God's will, pleasure, and choice. 1:9.

Faith in Christ, 1:13.

That we might be "taken into the inheritance," become part of the Lord's portion, which is His people, 1:11.

The gift of the Holy Spirit as a seal of that inheritance, 1:13, 14.

Final and complete redemption, 1:14.

Ultimate object, 2:7.

4. *The place of that choice and calling.*

Eternity, 1:4.

In Christ, 1:3; 3:11.

In heavenly places, 1:3.

5. The source of the knowledge of this choice and calling.

The word of truth—the Gospel, 1:13.
The earnest of the Spirit in our hearts, 1:13, 14.

2. The conception of the Church from the human side—the Church as God would have the Church itself conceive of it, 1:15-23.

This division takes the form of a prayer to the Father, that the Church may conceive, appreciate, and constantly realize the divine conception just set forth in 1:3-14. The prayer is for spiritual enlightenment that the Church may know three things in particular: The realization of the hope of their Christian calling, the knowledge of the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and the personal experience of the exceeding great power of God, 1:15-19.

The apostle here passes from the adoring view of the divine calling and choice to the prayer that its treasures of grace may be realized in the whole experience and life of the saints. The prayer covers three things:

1. "The hope of their calling."

"Hope" means realization.

"Calling" means effectuality, power to do.

2. "The riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints."

Observe how the apostle heaps up words to express the grandeur of the subject; it is an inheritance; His inheritance; the glory of His inheritance; the riches of the glory of His inheritance. Paraphrased it would read, "What is the wealth of the glory of the new Israel in the eternal Canaan, as it will be revealed in the saints?" The apostle seems to play upon this word

"inheritance," regarding it now as the heritage of the saints in God, and again as His heritage in them. Both are true.

3. "The exceeding greatness of His power."

We may see glorious visions, we may cherish high aspirations, and they may prove to be but the dream of vanity. The question of paramount importance is, What means exist for realizing them? What power is there that will enable believers to be what God wants them to be? The answer in the apostle's words is, "The exceeding power of God." This is the power that we have to count on.

A fuller and more detailed account of the power of God, which is to enable the Christian to live according to the purpose of God (1:20-2:22), is further described:

As exerted upon Christ (1:20-23), granting Him resurrection from the dead, 1:20; ascension to God's right hand, 1:21; lordship over the whole universe, and headship over the Church, 1:22, 23.

II. THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CHURCH, 2:1-22.

In a sense verses 1-10 of this chapter are a continuation of the prayer of the apostle, which was begun in 1:19, especially as further illustrating the power which God will work in and through the Church and the individual believer, which power is illustrated as being exerted not only upon Christ (1:19-22), but also upon individuals (2:1-10), whether they be Jews or Gentiles, granting to them a similar threefold gift, namely: Resurrection from spiritual death, 2:5; ascension with Christ to a spiritual sphere, a sphere above this present world, 2:6; the power to do good works and to manifest God's grace through the coming ages, 2:6-10.

As exerted upon the whole of humanity (2:11-22). The Gentiles, who formerly were alienated from God, have been brought nigh by the cross, so that now both Jews and Gentiles may have peace with God and with each other: they form one city, one family, one temple, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets.

The regeneration of the Gentiles and their being built into the spiritual temple of God is an example of the great power of God.

But considering the contents of this chapter as coming under division II, namely, "The Construction of the Church," it is better to consider this chapter as setting before us the idea of construction. Three thoughts are presented to us in this connection: the material out of which the Church is built; the means by which it is built; and the structure itself, considered as to its foundation, superstructure, and tenant.

1. The material out of which the Church is formed, 2:1-3, 11-13.

Note the graphic description of our condition by nature—the condition of every unregenerate man: First, we were "dead in trespasses and sins" (v. 1). Our natural walk is then described with respect to its moving cause and spirit (v. 2) and result (v. 4). By nature we are in the flesh (v. 11); without Christ, aliens; without God, strangers, without hope (v. 12); afar off (v. 13). What an unfinished and untouched negative! but is it not true to life?

2. The means by which the Church is constructed into a temple of God, 2:5-10, 13-18.

Men in their natural state are not fit to be stones in the spiritual temple of God, which is the Church of

Jesus Christ, until they have been quickened into spiritual life and raised to spiritual privileges in Christ. This is accomplished not by man's own efforts or works, but by God's free grace, for "we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (2:5-10).

Note the blessings God has granted to the believer in Christ: Resurrection from spiritual death (v. 5); ascension with Christ to a spiritual sphere above this present world; power to do good works and to manifest God's grace through the coming ages (vv. 7-10). Now, through grace, we are made nigh (v.13); reconciled (v. 16); recipients of peace (v. 17); have right of access to God (v. 18); fellow-citizens with the saints (v. 19); members of the household of God (v. 19).

3. **The description of the Structure itself, 1:20-22.**

Three thoughts are presented to us in this connection:

a) The Foundation of the spiritual temple—Jesus Christ, as confessed by prophets and apostles, 2:20.

Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, even Jesus Christ; on this Rock, and on no other, can the Church of Christ be built (cf. 1 Cor. 3:11; Matt. 16:18).

b) The Superstructure of the spiritual temple—the saints as individual believers in Christ and as aggregations of believers, 2:21, 22.

Each individual believer is a temple of the Holy Ghost (cf. 1 Cor. 6:19). But no believer is big enough to hold all there is of God, so God dwells in the aggregation of believers which we call a church. But no one church is big enough to hold all there is

of God, so God dwells in that larger body of believers called the Church, composed of those who have been called out of the world to faith in Jesus Christ. Just as we are told that the temple of Diana at Ephesus was made up of a number of smaller temples, each fitted so perfectly into one great and grand whole temple, so the Church of Christ, scattered hither and thither as she may be, is nevertheless so fitted and framed together as to form a beautiful temple for the Lord.

III. THE CONSTITUENCY OF THE CHURCH, 3:1-21.

In this chapter are set forth the personal relations existing between the writer and those addressed. In the same connection the apostle declares the kind of people out of which the Church is constructed, not, however, as to the individuals, as in chapter 2, but with regard to the two great divisions of mankind: Jew and Gentile; he magnifies his office of ministry to the Gentiles, and desires that they should understand his ministry, committed to him by the revelation of God (vv. 2-4). This mystery was revealed now as never before—that they should partake of the blessings of the Gospel. It was entrusted by special grace to him (vv. 5-7). Unworthy as he deemed himself, it was still his privilege to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to the Gentiles, yea, to all men (vv. 8, 9), so that the manifold wisdom of God should be displayed in the heavenly world (v. 10), in fulfillment of God's eternal purpose in Christ (v. 11), faith in whom gives liberty of approach to God (v.12). The apostle's tribulations should not be a discouragement, since they are an honor to those whose apostle he is (v. 13).

1. **Jews and Gentiles, 3:1-13.**

By reason of the death of Jesus Christ, the great wall that had divided Jew and Gentile was broken down, and by reason of the faith of both Jew and Gentile such distinctions had passed away and were lost in the name "believer" or "Christian." All of those belonging to these two great divisions of mankind who accept the gospel of which Paul was made a (or the) steward, become thereby members of the body of Christ, are united to the one great Head, and thus form the Church.

In this chapter we are let into one of the deepest mysteries of the purposes of God, namely the mystery of the Church. But this is dispensational truth, and an outline study like this does not undertake to go into such deep matters. It should be said, however, that there can be no true understanding of the Scriptures without some definite knowledge of this mystery —the Church period.

2. **The Doxology and concluding prayer, 3:14-21.**

Lastly, the main theme is resumed, and Paul prays for the indwelling of Christ, finishing the doctrinal part of the epistle with a doxology (3:14-21).

This takes the form of a prayer to the Father (vv. 14, 15) for two gifts: First, spiritual strengthening (v. 16); secondly, the indwelling of Christ (v. 17). These gifts are to establish them in love and further them in knowledge (v. 18), especially in the knowledge of the love of Christ, with a view to their final perfection (v. 19).

The doxology ascribes to God, the mighty worker of all the wondrous blessings described in the epistle

(v. 20), glory in the Church and in Christ forever (v 21).

B. THE PRACTICAL PART OF THE EPISTLE—SETTING FORTH THE VOCATION OR WALK OF THE CHURCH, Chapters 4-6.

In this division the Church is set forth as a visible organization such as God would have the world see. What kind of Church, what sort of membership, what picture of family life would God have the world see exhibited within the Church's life and experience? The answer lies in these three chapters.

I. A UNITED CHURCH, 4:1-16.

The walk of the Church before the world should be characterized by unity. The Church of Christ *is* one; let it maintain that unity. Our concern should be not to make so much as not to break or mar the unity that already exists. "We are not divided; all one body we." God would have the Church present a united front to the world. "That they all may be one . . . that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:21). A disrupted church cannot have much, if any, influence on the world.

We have here set before us—

1. The graces that maintain or keep unity, 4:1-3.

They are described as meekness, lowliness, long-suffering, forbearance, love. Where these exist you find no schism in the body.

It is worthy of note in this connection that all these virtues and graces are developed within the sphere of the Church. It is evidently God's will that every believer should associate himself with God's people and

there find opportunity for growth and service. We are justified alone, we are sanctified together.

Note further that all the exhortations of part two are based on the highest and noblest motives—not for personal or selfish reasons, not for one's own happiness or advantage, not even for the good of those about us, but for Christ's sake. The motive for Christlikeness is lifted to its highest point in Christ. For example, we are not to lie because we are members of the body of Christ; we are not to steal because we are Christ's. Special graces are to be exhibited because they are Christlike, because they are the natural expression of Christ within. So the expression, "in Christ," receives its true meaning; God is seen in Christ; hence, that life that is lived in and for Christ is the ideal life. Christ's life is to be reproduced in us, so it is said that we died, have been buried, have risen and ascended and been exalted in heavenly places with Him. In this epistle God is seen lifting humanity up to Himself in Christ.

2. The fundamental unities on which the unity of the Church is based, 4:4-6.

We have in this section three arguments, each argument having three clauses, for the unity of the Church. We have a trio of trios.

First trio (v. 4): The Church is one body, with one Head; one Spirit permeates all the members; one hope of calling.

Second trio (v. 5): Unity shown by what makes men Christians, and members of the Church. One Lord—the same Lord Jesus Christ is prince and possessor of all men equally. One faith—one way of access to God, of being united with Christ, of sharing His benefits and redemption, all the blessings of the

Gospel are appropriated in one way—by faith; one baptism—by the Spirit into the body of Christ, or open confession of Christ.

Third trio (v. 6): The unity of God in His threefold relation to believers is the crowning argument for the unity of the Church. Over all—the same divine majesty recognized by the Church; Through all —the same divine energy and activity working through all; In all—the same divine Being dwelling in all.

Here we have the Trinity again—Spirit (v. 4), Lord (v. 5), Father (v. 6). These three are *one*.

3. **This unity is not monotony, but recognizes a diversity of gifts, 4:7-11.**

A study of these verses reveals some very helpful and stirring thoughts:

Every believer has received a gift of one kind or another, therefore he should be useful.

He should find out just what his particular gift is, (this he can do by closely reading Romans 12:1-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:1-31), stir it up, and put it into use, for God will require it of him in the day of reckoning (Matt. 25:14-30).

No believer should be proud for he does not possess all the gifts. No one man should seek to "run" a church for the same reason.

The measure of the gift is according to the wisdom of Christ, therefore everyone should be content with his gift.

Every gift is for the welfare of the Church as a whole, hence is to be exercised in connection with the Church and in union with God's people. The gifts of Christ to His Church are enumerated here with reference to leadership primarily; the gifts pertaining to

membership are to be found in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12.

4. **The end and aim of these gifts, 4:12-16.**

In general they are for service, not ornament; for the building up of the entire body of the Church, not for personal aggrandizement. They are bestowed upon the Church in order that it may render helpful and efficient service and ministry (v. 12), which shall not cease to be necessary until every believer in Christ has passed beyond the need of further instruction in the things of God, (vv. 14-16). The pastor, the teacher, the evangelist and every individual believer in Christ is absolutely necessary to the upbuilding of the Church as a whole. The weakest needs the strongest and the strongest needs the weakest; no man is sufficient in himself. Specifically, these gifts are:

a) To equip the saints for ministering service (4:12).

b) For the edification of the Church, and the building up of the believer in the true faith and doctrine of the Son of God (4:13, 14).

c) For protection from false teachers and erroneous doctrine (4:14).

d) To make full-grown men out of spiritual children; for the presentation of every man perfect in Christ (4:15, 16).

II. AN UNBLAMABLE MEMBERSHIP, 4:17-5:21.

Under I we saw the walk of the Church as a whole; here our attention is fixed upon the walk of the individual member of the Church—he must walk in holiness and purity.

1. **The former manner of living is described, 4:17-19.**

2. **The manner of living of the new (regenerate) man, 4:17a, 20-24.**

3. **The specific virtues of the new life in Christ are then described:**

a) Truthfulness, based on close union with one another (4:25).

b) Right use of anger, based upon the harm which the devil may do (4:26, 27). Anger as the expression of mere wounded personality is wrong and sinful, for it means that self is in command; anger as the pure expression of repugnance to wrong in loyalty to God is not wrong. The apostle says, "Let anger be from the latter, never from the former motive."

c) Honest toil (4:28). Not only that which is legally allowed, but that which is beneficially good. The true object of work is to be benefactors, not merely to accumulate.

d) Pure conversation (4:29, 30). Based on the desire to help those who hear. Aim to edify. Impure, idle, worthless conversation grieves the Holy Spirit, who dwells in you.

e) Gentleness, based on God's forgiveness of us (4:31, 32).

f) Love, based on Christ's love and self-sacrifice (5:1-2).

III. AN IDEAL HOME AND FAMILY LIFE, 5:22-6:9.

1. **The relation of husband and wife, 5:22-33.**

This relationship is to be similar to that which exists between Christ and His Church. The husband is to be to the wife and do for her what Christ is to and

has done for the Church: loving care and self-sacrifice. The wife is to render the same reverence and submission to her husband that the Church renders to Christ. Such a reciprocal relationship absolutely guarantees a happy, blessed, and contented married life.

2. **The relation of parents and children, 6:1-4.**

Parents are not to provoke their children to wrath, but to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (cf. Col. 3:21). Children are to obey their parents as being in the place of God to them.

3. **The relation of masters and servants, 6:5-9.**

Equity and righteous treatment on the part of masters, and faithful service as unto Christ on the part of servants are emphasized. Such a reciprocal relationship would end all labor troubles.

Conclusion:

The dynamic power for the realization of these ideal relationships, 6:10-18. As Christian warriors we must be armored with the complete panoply of God, which is here described as is also the nature and seriousness of the conflict.

The epistle concludes with the request of the apostle for prayers for himself (vv. 19, 20), and with some final salutations (vv. 23, 24).

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN

INTRODUCTORY

No study of this epistle can be thorough or satisfactory which does not recognize, ere it takes up the minute study of the letter, some outstanding characteristics of the most wonderful part of Holy Writ.

It is Simple and Yet Profound.

It is monosyllabic: it abounds in words of one syllable; yet how full of meaning is each word! Study the words: "light," "love," "life," "truth," "death"; analyze, tell the full meaning of any one of them, if you can. "Light"—what is it? Science itself cannot explain it. Science cannot explain or describe perfectly the framework of even a soap-bubble; how then can it explain what "light" is? Then there is the word "love," and "God"; can these be fully understood? And yet, they are simple, monosyllabic words.

How simple its phrases and sentences! And yet how full of incomprehendable meaning they are. "God is love"—twice this simple phrase is used, yet who can understand it either time? Monosyllabic, each word; profound, the phrase; surpassing human knowledge, the meaning. "Behold, what manner of love"! God is love"; "God is light"—how simple; and yet "the strongest human mind, with the largest possible line of measurement, cannot reach the bottom of that wonderful sentence of three words. Eternity itself can alone reveal it in its fullness. You read, 'God is just,' but you never read, 'God is justice.' You do read that 'God is love'; not only loving, but love—that is unfathomable."

It is an Epistle of Contrasts and Antithesis.

It seems to take great delight in setting one thing over against another in the same sentence, for example: love and hate; light and darkness; life and death; truth and falsehood; flesh and spirit; sin and righteousness; children of God and children of the wicked one.

It is Conclusive.

Its language is marked by strong finality. There is a finality about its statements that, after it has expressed itself, it has left nothing necessary to the subject unsaid, and nothing that needs to be said after it has said it. For instance, the epistle says: "It is the last time" (R. V., "hour"). This is the conclusive statement of this epistle—that nothing follows it. Though the book of Revelation follows this epistle in our Bibles, it nevertheless comes chronologically before it. If the Second and Third Epistles of John were written later, it must be remembered that they were letters to individuals, and not messages to the Church, as such. The First Epistle of John is God's last message to the Church. The whole Christian age is the "last time" in the sense that no other dispensation is to arise until Christ comes. And with this agree the words of Hebrews 1:2: "God . . . . hath spoken unto us in these last days in his Son." This is the last of the epistles as the Gospel of John is the last of the gospels.

It is Characterized by Sublime Positiveness.

Mark its sublime positiveness and unqualified assurance: "We know"; and "Hereby do we know that we know." John had not the slightest doubt as to his authority and knowledge. Such expressions, so com-

mon among us today, as "I am not so sure," "I cannot say that I am positive about it," "I guess it's so," "I presume it is a fact," or "I suppose so," find no place in the vocabulary of the apostle. He was "dead sure" of what he knew.

Xenophanes speaks thus:

> "And no man knows distinctly anything,
> And no man ever will."

Byron, in *Childe Harold,* says:

> "Well didst thou speak, Athena's wisest son!
> 'All that we know is, nothing can be known.'"

But John, in his epistle, says: "We know" and "we do know that we know." There are some things, therefore, the Christian may know to a certainty. There is much need today of the Christian man who "knows that he knows." The "I-don't-know" man amounts to nothing when he is calculating magnitudes, forces, oppositions, possibilities, conflicts.

There are now men who "do not deny"; that is their weakness. The trouble with the late Robert G. Ingersoll was not so much that he was an atheist as an agnostic. When called an atheist, he resented it, and said: "I am not an atheist; I do not say that there is no God; I only affirm that I do not know." "I do not know" was his sin.

Further, there are some men who "hope," "think," "guess"; that is their pity. They might, and ought to "know." One "who knows" may be called "presumptuous" by those who "are not sure that they know"; but it is just as presumptuous for some to say "you positively cannot know," as it is for others to say, "We do know that we know." Agnosticism has not yet proven itself to be omniscient.

Why should a man be considered a philosopher be-

cause he says, "I do not know"; while another may be called a presumptuous fool because he asserts with certainty that "he knows"? The sublime positiveness of this epistle is marvelous and rebuking. Do we "know" that we have eternal life? etc. In the light of this epistle the man who knows is saved; whereas, the man who knows not Jesus Christ and Him crucified is lost.

It Differs from the Pauline Epistles.

In this: that it sets God *before us*, in the person of Christ; whereas, in the Pauline Epistles, the believer is set *before God*, as in Christ. So that this epistle has to do with our *state* rather than our *standing*. This is generally, not unqualifiedly, characteristic of this epistle. Likeness to God is the test of Christian reality as here set forth. We prove by our God-like life that we have been accepted before the Father in the Beloved. In the Gospel eternal life is set before us in Jesus Christ; whereas, in the epistle eternal life is set forth as manifested to us and in our lives.

It Deals with the Fundamentals of Our Christian Religion as Related to both Faith and Practice, Creed and Life.

"John, in meeting the abounding heresies of the day, teaches that the real principle of the Christian life is found in the incarnate living Word, and that the fundamental creed demands faith in the deity, incarnation, and atonement of the eternal Son of God as the manifestation of the eternal love of God. He thereby emphasizes the fundamental creed of Christianity as opposed to all forms of liberalism, in that age, and in all ages." —*Gregory.*

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN

A Synopsis

Theme: FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

Key verse, 1:3; key word, "fellowship" (1:3).

Introduction:

1. The living Christ through whom we have Fellowship.

a) Pre-existent in eternity, 1:1a.
b) Manifested in time, 1:1b, 2.
c) Known by personal experience, 1:1-3.
d) Authoritatively declared, 1:3.

2. Purpose of the message—Fellowship, 1:3, 4 (cp. 1:4; 5:13).

a) With the Father.
b) With the Son.
c) With fellow-believers.

I. THE NATURE OF FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD: WALKING IN THE LIGHT, 1:5-2:29.

1. Statement of fact that "God is Light." Its meaning.

2. Fellowship with God, who is Light, involves:

a) Fellowship with the saints, 1:5.
b) A walk of purity, 1:6, 7.
c) A right attitude towards the question of sin, 1:1-2:2; cf. 3:3-9; 5:4, 18.
(1) Admit it, 1:8, 10.
aa) As to sinful nature, 1:8.
bb) As to sinful acts, 1:10.
cc) What denial involves, 1:8b, 10b.
God's veracity challenged.
Own sanity questioned.

No indwelling word of God as arbiter.

(2) Confess it, 1:9.

Twofold result: Pardon, cleansing.

(3) Get victory over it, 2:1. Cf. 1:7b, 9b; 3:3-9; 5:4, 18.

aa) Victory possible, 2:1, 1:9b, 3:3-9; 5:4, 18.

bb) Provision in case of failure, 2:2, 1:9.

d) A righteous life, 2:3-29.

Set forth in a threefold relationship:

(1) Towards God: An obedient Christ-like life, 2:3-6, 29. Cf. 3:7, 10, 22-24.

(2) Towards man: A loving spirit, 2:7-11, cf. 3:13-24; 4:7-21.

(3) Towards Satan: 2:12-28.

aa) Worldliness, 2:12-17; cf. 2:2, 14; 3:11, 13; 4:4, 9; 5:4, 5, 19.

bb) False teaching, 2:18-28. (Considered under II. c. 4.)

II. THE SAFEGUARD (2:26) OF FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD: ADHERENCE TO EVANGELICAL TRUTH, cf. 2:18-28; 4:1-6, 15; 5:1, 5.

1. The necessity of testing all teaching and teachers, 4:1.

2. The standard:

In general: right views of the person and work of Jesus Christ.

a) The incarnation, 4:2, 3; 5:1.

b) The deity of Christ, 2:18-28; 4:2, 5, 10, 15, 16; 5:5, 20.

c) Unity of the person of Jesus Christ: Jesus is the Christ, 4:2, 3; 2:22; 5:1, 6; (cf. Mark 8:29, Acts 18:5).

d) His redemptive work, 4:9, 10, 14; (cf. 1:7, 9; 2:2; 3:5, 8, 16; 5:5, 6).

III. THE CONDITION OR FOUNDATION OF FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD: FAITH, 5:1-12.

1. The content of faith, 5:1-4.

a) Jesus is the Christ, 5:1; cf. 4:2, 3; 1 Cor. 12:3.
b) Jesus is the Son of God, 5:5, 10; cf. 4:15.
c) Jesus came by water and blood, 5:5, 6.

2. The witness of faith, 5:5-10.

a) The witness of the Spirit, who is truth, 5:7, 8.
b) The witness of humanity, 5:9.
c) The witness of the Scriptures, 5:9.

3. The victory of faith, 5:4, 5 (cf. 5:1-3).

a) Assured by spiritual birth, 5:1, 4, 5.
b) The conflict:
(1) The world, 5:1-3.
(2) The flesh, 5:4, 5.
(3) The devil, 5:18.
c) Individual victory 5:5 ("The One").
d) Collective victory 5:4 ("All that is born of God").

IV. THE PRIVILEGES OF FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD. THE CERTAINTIES OF FAITH, 5:13-21.

1. The assurance of personal salvation, 5:10-13.

2. Assured answer to personal and individual prayer, 5:14, 15.

3. Assured answer to intercessory prayer, 5:16, 17.

4. Assured victory over sin, 5:18, 19.

5. An assured knowledge of Him in whom we have believed, 5:19-21.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN

Fuller Analysis

Theme: FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

Introduction, 1:1-4:

1. The subject matter of the message—the living Christ, the incarnate Word, the One through whom we have fellowship with the Father.

a) The incarnate and eternal Word was preëxistent in and from eternity—"That which was from the beginning."

"Beginning" occurs nine times in this epistle: first, in the absolute sense—"The devil sinneth from the beginning" (1:1; 2:7, 13, 14, 24; 3:8, 11); second, in the relative sense—"That which ye have heard from the beginning" (2:24). Compare "In the beginning" of the Gospel of John (1:1), and "From the beginning" of the epistle (1:1). In the epistle, the writer looks back to the initial point of time and describes what has been in existence *from* that time onward; in the Gospel, "in the beginning" characterizes the absolute divine Word as He was before and at the foundation of the world. The Gospel emphasizes the existence of the Word before *Creation;* the Epistle, before the *Incarnation.*

b) The eternal Word was manifested in time—"For the life was manifested, and we have seen it," 1:1, 2.

The preëxistent, intangeable, invisible Word now becomes the historical Jesus Christ, seen, felt, handled. He who was with the Father now comes to take up His dwelling with men; deity becomes united with humanity.

c) The incarnate Word known by personal experi-

ence—"That which we have seen . . . heard . . . handled" (1:1, 3).

Note the ascending climax, making the meaning clearer at each step; a full and complete experience being thus expressed. Note also that the reference is to experience in this case and not to prophecy (cf. Luke 24:39 and John 20:27). On the value of experience as an argument, see 2 Peter 1:15-21; Acts 1:21, 22; 4:20; 5:32; John 3:10, 11; 15:27; 19:35; 21:24. Testimony is valid proof (Mark 16:14). The Word of life here refers to the personal Word, who is both the character and subject of the message.

2. The aim and purpose of the message—"That ye may have fellowship with us . . . with the Father . . . with . . . Jesus Christ," and all this to the end that "your joy might be full (1:3, 4).

"Fellowship" is not mere society, but partnership, the common possession of anything by different persons (Acts 2:42; 4:32-37; Luke 5:10; Hebrews 2:14; 1 Peter 4:13). The words "may have" indicate not only possession but conscious possession and enjoyment of the thing possessed. "That your joy might be full" —the Christian's life is not perfected until it smiles and sings. The incarnation of Christ is a source of unending joy (Luke 2:9-14.)

I. THE NATURE OF FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD: WALKING IN THE LIGHT, 1:5-2:28.

1. Statement of the fact that "God is Light," 1:5.

God is light as well as "spirit" (John 4:24), and "love" (John 3:16). Light stands for absolute purity and holiness; "darkness" means sin, evil (John 3:17-19).

2. Fellowship with God, who is Light, includes:

a) Fellowship with the saints, 1:5.

We are justified alone; we are sanctified together. We need to meet with the assembly of God's people. To neglect church-going is to invite apostasy (Heb. 10:24-39). Do we love the saints better than the people of the world? Do we love the prayer-meeting better than the theatre or the card-party? Do we prefer the worldly crowd to the church crowd? We may be known by the company we keep. This is a test of fellowship with God—fellowship with His people. We obey the law of spiritual gravitation: every man has his own place, every man finds his own place, every man goes to his own place (cf. Acts 1:25; 4:23).

b) A walk of purity, 1:6, 7.

Fellowship with God means a life that is in sympathy with holiness, that practices holiness, that progresses in holiness. Perfection in Christian character comes not through a necessary tasting and experiencing of sin (as Gnosticism taught), for Christ the absolutely holy One was altogether free from sin. A life lived in sin can no more be in fellowship with God than a life lived in a coal pit can have fellowship with the sun. "How can two walk together, except they be agreed?" The word "walk" here refers to the habitual practice of a man's life. Here is the test of fellowship with God—How are we walking?

c) A right attitude towards the fact of sin, 1:7-2:2; 5:4, 18.

The proper attitude of the believer towards the fact of sin is set forth as follows:

(1) He admits sin to be a fact and an entity, 1:8-10.

aa) As to the existence of a sinful nature, even in the regenerate child of God, 1:8.

"Sin" here is singular, and refers to nature rather than to acts; it means original sin. The regenerate man has two natures: the old Adam nature and the new nature which he received from God at the time of his regeneration (2 Pet. 1:4; Gal. 5:17; see Rom. cc. 6 and 7). The old nature is never made over, but is to be constantly crucified (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15; 2:20; 4:19; Col. 1:27). These two natures we carry with us until we die.

bb) That this sinful nature has manifested itself in sinful acts, 1:10.

"Sinned" in v. 10, refers to sinful acts as does also "sins" in v. 9. Victory over all wilful, known sin is a Biblical doctrine, but the assertion of the impossibility of sinning in any sense in this life is a delusion and contrary to the doctrine of the Scriptures. Such a claim arises from ignorance concerning the true nature of sin; from inadequate views of the nature of God, particularly His holiness; from wrong standards of comparison, or from exaggeration of our own character.

(2) He confesses his sins to God, 1:9.

He who is in fellowship with God admits and confesses his "sin" and "sins" and receives pardon and cleansing (1:7, 9). Known sin unconfessed is unforgiven. As we become conscious of sins committed we must confess them to God. We are chastened if we do not (2 Sam. 7:14, 15; 12:13, 14; 1 Cor. 5:5; Heb. 12:3-13; contrast Psa. 32:3, 4, with v. 5, and Psa. 51). Sins against man should be confessed to man also (Matt. 5:23, 24; Luke 19:8; James 5:16). How grandly God forgives (John 20:23; 1 John 3:5; Psa. 32:1; Isa. 44:22; Rom. 6:6; Psa. 52:2, 7; 51:12; Heb. 8:12)!

(3) He gets victory over sin, 2:1; cf. 1:7, 9—the two cleansings: instantaneous and progressive.

"That ye may not sin"—this is the possibility and privilege of the regenerate child of God. No sin is necessary; we may be kept from it. This is what the "cleansing" of v. 9, following the forgiveness of that verse, means: forgiven, *and* power not to do it again. This fact is stated as against any false inference that might be made from 1:8. Constant victory is possible (2:1; cf. 3:3-9; 5:4, 18). This possibility is asserted because the Word of God strengthens us for the conflict (2:14); the seed of God imparts a new tendency to holiness (3:9); the Spirit of God abiding in us gives us a new power to overcome (2:4; 3:4; 4:4); the indwelling Christ keeps the believer (5:18). If, therefore, the believer understands his position, he need not yield to sin. While the old Adamic nature may continue to exist in the believer, yet sinful acts are not by any means necessary or inevitable. While provision is made for such acts in 2:2, yet sin cannot be indulged in as a habit of life (3:3-9; Rom. 6:1, 2).

(4) Provision is made in case of falling into sin, 2:2. We have an Advocate, Jesus Christ, who is at the right hand of God interceding for us. The fact that He is "righteous" assures us that His advocacy prevails.

Note then the three things regarding sin as summed up in this section: First, the confession that we do sin; second, the principle that we must not sin; third, the consolation that if we do sin, it is not irremediable.

a) Walking in the light is shown by a righteous, obedient, and Christlike life, 2:3-28.

Such a life is set forth in a threefold relationship:

(1) Towards God: an obedient, Christlike life, 2:3-6, 29; cf. 3:7, 10, 22-24.

Obedience to the word of Christ and the keeping of the commandments (which in this case are described as being summed up in two commandments: faith in Christ, and love towards the brethren, 3:23, 24) is an evidence of fellowship with God. The "word" refers to the revelation of God as a whole and includes all its separate commands and injunctions; the "commandments" refer to definite and particular instructions and injunctions. Those who are in fellowship with God will "walk even as he walked." It is probable that reference is here made to the life of Jesus as recorded in the four Gospels.

(2) Towards man: a loving spirit; an absence of hatred and ill-feeling, 2:7-11; cf. 3:13-24; 4:7-21.

Hatred and ill-feeling in the heart towards any fellowman, the cherishing of grudges, any unwillingness to forgive wrongs or misunderstandings on our part or towards us by others is a mark of walking in darkness. No true Christian will continue in this mood; indeed, is it not impossible for him to do so (see Matt. 5:23, 24; 6:12, 14, 15; 18:21-35; Eph. 4:26, 27, 31, 32)?

But there must be not merely an absence of hatred and ill-feeling; there must be an active and beneficent manifestation of love shown in self-sacrifice for the brethren. True love is positive as well as negative (cf. 3:13-24; 4:7-21). It is not enough to say, "I have no ill-feeling towards my brother who has wronged me"; it is your duty to do him positive good (Rom. 12:20; Matt. 5:43-48).

(3) Towards Satan and the world of evil: hate the world; avoid false teachers and teaching, 2:12-28.

aa) "Love not the world," 2:12-17; cf. 2:24; 3:11, 13; 4:4, 9; 5:4, 19.

By the "world" is meant not the created universe, nor mankind as such, but that evil principle which is in this world (or age) and is dominated by Satan and is antagonistic to Christ and the interests of the human soul. It is defined as "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." We are forbidden to love this "world" because it is satanic in its origin and perishing in its destiny.

bb) By opposing false teaching and teachers, 2:18-28. This will be considered under III.

II. THE FRUIT OF FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD: HOLINESS AND LOVE, 2:29-3:24.

1. The contrast between the children of God and the children of the devil, 2:29-3:12.

a) All men are not the children of God in the same sense. By nature we are "His offspring," and in that creative sense, children of God. The New Testament, however, knows of a deeper sonship than that—a sonship of choice and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, by which we "become the children of God" (John 1:12; Gal. 3:26). Those who do not thus by an act of faith receive Jesus Christ as Saviour remain what they are by nature—not children of God in the special sense, but children of the devil (cf. Eph. 2:1-5; 1 John 3:10).

b) Sonship carries with it responsibility as well as privilege—purity and holiness of life, 3:3-12.

Of course, we are to be "like him" when we shall see Him face to face at His coming, yet a present obligation to holiness now rests upon us. The children of God and those of the devil are distinguished by their manner of living. The regenerate live victorious lives. A child of God may commit an *act* of sin, but he will not live in a *state* of sin: "he cannot sin"—that is to say, the verb being in the singular, he cannot habitu-

ally sin, he cannot make sin the practice of his life, he will not be living in sin. "Sin" here is recognized as a wilful, known transgression. The child of God may live without wilful, known sin. (For further discussion under this point see I. (3). Thus we see that the test of fellowship, of regeneration, of having been begotten of the Father is a life of holiness; such a life the unregenerate cannot live, for a bad tree cannot bring forth good fruit (Matt. 7:18-20); "they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:8).

2. Love, as well as holiness, is to be characteristic of the children of God—those who are living in fellowship with Him, 3:11-22.

Love to the brethren has been touched upon before, but from its negative side and as manifesting itself in an absence of hatred (2:9-14). Here it is presented from the positive side, being defined and illustrated as an active, practical principle showing itself in manifest philanthropy. The absence of such practical love in any case indicates a condition of spiritual death; hatred and ill-feeling are suicide and murder (3:15). Our love to the brethren must be as active and practical in its outworkings as was and is God's love to us (3:16, 17). Not to thus love is to be condemned in heart (3:19, 20), to be hindered in our prayer life (3:22), to be found transgressors of God's commandments (3:23; cf. 2:3, 4), and to lose the consciousness of God's abiding presence within us (3:24).

III. THE SAFEGUARD (2:26) OF FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD: ADHERENCE TO EVANGELICAL TRUTH AND DOCTRINE, 4:1-21; cf. 2:18-28; 5:1-5.

1. The testing of all teachers and doctrine, 4:1.

The believer individually and the Church collectively are under obligation to test all teachers not one of

whom is to be received and accepted simply because he is sincere or comes in the name of Christ (Matt. 24:4, 5). The individual Christian, and the Church are able to thus discern (2:21, 27; 1 Cor. 12:10; Rev. 2:2, 14, 15, 20).

The point to be decided regarding these teachers is, Are they of God or of the devil? Are they Christian or antichristian? Are they controlled by the Spirit of God or by the spirit of the world? The question at issue is one of origin: From whom come they, and from whence does their teaching come? What or who is the moving spirit of it and them? Satan is a counterfeiter of all that God does. He has his church (Rev. 2:9), his ministry (2 Cor. 11:13-15), his membership (1 John 3:10), his christ, or better, antichrist (2:18-28); he has deliberately laid plans to deceive God's people (Eph. 4:14; Rom. 16:18).

2. The fundamental test to be applied to all teachers and teaching: It touches the person and work of Christ.

Orthodoxy in essentials; soundness in the doctrine of Christ. We cannot be right in the rest unless we think rightly of Him. Christianity is Christo-centric; if we are wrong at the centre, we are wrong at the circumference. If we are right at the centre, we cannot depart far from that which is sound.

a) The incarnation, 4:2, 3; cf. 2:22.

To deny that the babe born of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem (Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:2; Matt. 2:8, 16) was God manifest in the flesh; to deny that the historical Jesus of Nazareth was the anointed Saviour of the world is sufficient to brand teacher and teaching as not of God, according to the teaching of this epistle. Was Mary's Son God manifest in the flesh, yes or no? This is one of the tests of orthodoxy. Let us not be

afraid of that word "orthodoxy," for it means "sound doctrine"; we are all interested in that form of teaching. Let us sound the tocsin of the early church: "Jesus is anathema," or "Jesus is the Christ," which? (1 Cor. 12:3). There is no dodging the issue. To hold anything less than that "Jesus is the Christ" is, as the apostle himself says in the literal rendering of 4:3, "to annul" or "dissolve" Christ. It is well to speak of our advanced learning, but let us not forget that, as some one has well said, "There is an advance, even in the doctrine of Christ, which is not progress but apostasy" (2 John 9). There is a world of difference in progress in the Truth and progress away from the truth.

b) The deity of Jesus Christ: That Jesus Christ was very God, 4:2, 5, 15, 16; cf. 2:18, 22, 28; 5:5, 9-13, 20.

The true doctrine of Christ is not merely that He was divine, but that He was deity; not that He was godlike, but very God. There is a teaching today which admits that Jesus was divine just as all men are divine, only He was more so; that Jesus was the son of God as all men are the sons of God; that there is divinity in us all as there was in Christ. This is false doctrine. Jesus Christ was the Son of God in a unique sense, a sense which can never be predicted of any other of the sons of men; He was the "only-begotten" Son of the Father; we are of the "many sons." We "become" sons of God by faith in Christ (John 1:12); Jesus never became a Son, He always was such. It makes no difference whether you lift humanity up to Christ or bring Christ down to humanity, the very moment you make both equally the sons of God in kind, you are teaching what is contrary to New Testament doctrine.

The claims of Jesus were for a unique Sonship. The Jews did not attempt to stone Him because He claimed that God was His Father in the same sense that He was their Father also. It is clear from the spirit and actions of the Jews what they understood by such a claim (John 5:17-31). To say that Jesus was no more divine than we are is to concede the righteousness of the judgment which was pronounced upon Jesus by the Jews and which resulted in His death. This is serious indeed.

c) That Jesus and the Christ are one and inseparable, 4:2, 3; 2:22; 5:1.

There must be no separation between Jesus and the Christ such as the Gnostics in John's day, and certain sects today, which are a rehash of Gnosticism, would have us believe. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8). Jesus is not the appearance which the Christ assumed, nor is the Christ the appearance which Jesus of Nazareth assumed. Jesus Christ is one and indivisible. To thus "annul" or "dissolve" Christ (4:3, literally) is contrary to sound doctrine, and the mark of a false teacher.

d) That the death of Jesus Christ was the sacrificial dying of the One who was both God and man, 5:6.

"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood." To hold that Jesus Christ was a mere man and that at His baptism the Christ came upon Him and remained with Him until He reached the cross at which moment it left Him, so that it was a mere man that came to the Jordan and a mere man that died upon the cross, is to teach what is erroneous. It was Jesus Christ, the divine-human, God-man, very God and very man who lay in that manger and who hung

upon that cross. This is He that came by water and blood.

e) That the death of Jesus Christ upon the cross was a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of mankind, 4:9, 10, 14; cf. 2:2; 3:16; 5:6.

"Propitiation" means "mercy-seat," and suggests to us the blood-sprinkled seat of the ark of the covenant which covered the law of God. The sprinkling of blood upon this "mercy-seat" constituted a ground on which a righteous God could justly pardon those who had broken his law, and yet maintain and manifest His righteousness. So the death of Jesus Christ is the ground on which a righteous God can give pardon to penitent sinners (see Romans 3:25—the death of Christ exhibits the righteousness of God as well as, even if not more than, His love).

3. This truth, evangelical though it be, must be held, preached, and taught in love, 4:7-21.

There are three sections in this epistle dealing with the spirit of love in the life of the believer: 2:7-11; 3:13-24; 4:7-21. The context in each case determines the particular phase of love there emphasized. For example:

In 2:7-11 love to the brethren is presented from the negative side: an absence of a spirit of hatred and ill-feeling, failure to manifest which shows a man to be out of fellowship with the Father, and is a sign of walking in the darkness rather than the light.

In 3:13-24 this same spirit of love is presented from the positive side as consisting not merely in the absence of hatred and ill-feeling towards those who may have wronged us, but in the seeking of opportunities for rendering them active beneficence which is declared to

be a mark of fellowship and sonship, a test of having passed out of death into life (3:14).

In 4:7-21, the section we are now considering in particular connection with false teachers and teaching, emphasis is laid upon the manner and spirit in which we promulgate truth and correct errors in doctrine. We should love heretics even though we hate their doctrines. There is grave danger that while we are hunting heresy the fire of love may go out upon the altar of our hearts (cf. Rev. 2:2 with v. 5). We have here a definition of love also (4:9-11), showing that love stops not even at the sacrifice of its dearest interests in its desire to promulgate the welfare of those loved. God so loved that He gave—so should we (4:9-11). The possession and manifestation of such love destroys fear and creates confidence towards God and in our relation towards Him (4:17, 18).

IV. THE CONDITION OR FOUNDATION OF FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD: FAITH IN CHRIST, 5:1-12.

Faith in Christ admits us into fellowship with God Faith gives life, and there can be no fellowship with God without the life of God (5:11, 12). Faith is here presented as individual, that is, as consisting of knowledge, assent and appropriation of Christ on the part of the individual (5:1, 5); as collective, that is, as a body of truth (cf. Jude 3: "the faith once (for all) delivered to the saints"), the creedal expression of the Church of Christ in harmony with the revealed Word of God (5:4, 5).

1. The contents of the faith which initiates us into fellowship with God, 5:1-4.

a) That Jesus is the Christ, 5:1; cf. 4:2; 1 Cor. 12:3. See under III. 2. b) and c). The fact of history must become the fact of Christian faith. Jesus of

Nazareth is the divinely appointed Redeemer of the world; Prophet, Priest, and King—as Prophet to reveal, as Priest to work out, as King to confer the blessings of salvation.

b) That Jesus is the Son of God, 5:5, cf. v. 10; 4:15. See under III. 2. a) to d).

c) That Jesus came both by water and by blood, 5:6. See under III. 2. d).

Thus we see that the faith which initiates us into fellowship with God deals supremely with the fundamentals of Christian faith. There can be no fellowship where these are denied or ignored. Fellowship with the Father is wrapped up with right views concerning the person and work of His Son Jesus Chirst.

2. The witness of faith, 5:5-10.

Faith in Christ assures us also of fellowship with God. Here is a study in Christian Evidences: nine times in these verses is the idea of "witness" referred to. John may here be referring to the fourth gospel (cf. John 20:30, 31), which may be called the Gospel of Witness.

a) The witness of the Spirit which is truth, 5:6-8.

The Spirit testifies to the fact that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. Would the Spirit, who is truth, thus testify to what is false? Jesus Christ must have been all He claimed to be or the Spirit would not have anointed Him. Pentecost is appealed to by Peter as an evidence of the truth of the claims of Christ (Acts 2:14-36; cf. John 7:37-39, and cc. 14-16).

b) The witness of humanity, 5:9.

We "receive the witness of men." The apostle is probably referring to their having received the testi-

mony of the fourth gospel. So it may refer also to the witness of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of men today (cf. Rom. 8:14-16; Eph. 1:13; Gal. 4:6). Here is the need and value of testimony by the redeemed today. Silence is ofttimes a sin; it is always so when a word is our duty. It is remarkable to note that wherever in the Acts the Holy Spirit fell upon believers the result was connected with speech, witness, testimony. On the day of Pentecost the Spirit came in the form of *tongues* of fire.

c) The witness of the Scriptures, 5:9.

This is the witness of God and is to be believed (John 5:39, 46). The Scriptures are the ground of our assurance as well as being a revelation of God to us.

The believer has "the witness in himself," that is to say, there is a sense in which he is independent of external proof (note omission of words "of God" in connection with the Son in v. 12). There is no need to present evidences of the deity of Christ to the believer; he knows it from an inner experience.

3. **The victory or the power of faith, 5:4, 5; cf. 1-3.**

Birth assumes victory (5:1; cf. 3:6-8). Spiritual birth is necessary to spiritual victory. The ever-conqueror is the ever-believer. Faith insures victory. John knew that from the teaching of Jesus (John 3:3-5; cf. also this epistle 2:29; 3:6, 9; 4:7). This is the conquest or conflict, indicating that there will always be a battle with the world (5:4, 5), and the devil (5:18). But victory is assured to the faithful (5:5).

There is an individual victory (5:5—"the one," etc.), and a collective victory (5:4—"all that which is born

of God"; "the faith of us"). So faith is connected not only with what we believe but what is believed. Here is an overcoming creed and an overcoming Church as well as an overcoming believer. This is a refreshing truth for an age which pays so little attention to creeds as this age does. No school of antichristian thought is invulnerable to a Church with a faith like this. There are other apostates like Julian who will cry, "Galilaei Vicisti—O thou Galilean, Thou hast conquered!" John sees a picture of a triumphant Church, and exclaims: "This is the conquest of the world!"

V. THE PRIVILEGES ARISING FROM FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD: THE CERTAINTIES OF FAITH, 5:13-21.

1. The assurance of personal salvation, 5:10-13.

This is one of the purposes of the writing of this epistle: that we may "know" that we have eternal life. To "know" here means not merely to perceive or to know in the ordinary sense of that word, but to know with a definite, settled, and unquestioning knowledge that we are really saved. (This epistle is complementary to the fourth gospel, cf. 5:13 with 20:30, 31). See under IV. 2. b).

2. Assured answer to personal prayer, 5:14-15.

The thought of assurance of salvation leads to that of assurance in prayer. If we know that we have eternal life, we know that we have boldness. If we are sons, we may speak freely with the Father. The important thought is not that God hears so much as that He answers our prayers. The limit to asking and granting is "his will," if that can be considered a limit. It is rather an encouragement, for He knows what is best.

3. Assured answer to intercessory prayer, 5:16, 17.

Two distinctions are recognized in these verses: sin, and sin unto death; and the difference between "ask" and "pray." There is a difference between an act of sin and a state of sin—the latter is "sin unto death," not "a" sin unto death as the Authorized Version has it. If the sin unto death is a specific act we are not able absolutely to define it (cf. Matt. 12:31, 32; Mark 3:28, 29). John knows of but two realms: life and death; faith and righteousness leads to, indeed is, life; sin and unrighteousness leads to, indeed is, death. "Ask" is a word used of an inferior to a superior; "pray" is used of an equal, of one who asks on equal terms, as, for example, Christ asking of the Father. We may not with absolute certainty demand ("pray") the conversion of the wilful, persistent rejector, we may nevertheless "ask" for him. And inasmuch as the sin unto death is not here defined we may therefore feel free to ask for all men. Here is our attitude towards our sinning brethren—a blessed ministry of intercession: we shall ask and pray, and God shall give.

4. Assured victory over sin, 5:18, 19.

"He that is begotten of God keepeth himself (or him)." He that is begotten of God (Christ), keepeth him that is begotten of Him (the believer). It is Christ who watches over His people (John 10:28, 29). Through the indwelling Christ Satan has no power over the believer. This verse guards against any inferred carelessness from 5:16, 17. The believer does not fall from inward weakness—for the indwelling Christ keepeth him; nor from outward assaults—for Christ allows the wicked one to touch him not. "Touch" means to lay not hold of. Satan is allowed

to test us but not to be victorious over us. The world lies in his power, but not the believer.

5. An assured knowledge of Him in whom we have believed, 5:20, 21.

Jesus Christ is the solver of life's greatest problems: God and human destiny. Here is the revealing power of faith in Christ. The child of God knows that he has not followed cunningly devised fables. Faith in Christ gives him clearness of insight. He knows God and the way of life.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

ITS IMPORTANCE.

"Let every Christian exert himself to understand well the Gospel of John and to be posted in it; for John is the master evangelist and his Gospel the one, true tenderest chief gospel, a commentary and exposition of the whole Bible."—*Luther.*

THE MAN (21:24).

Home and Surroundings.

His father and brother were fishermen, as also was he himself. His father's name was Zebedee; his mother's, Salome (Mark 15:40); and his brother's, James. His family was doubtless well-to-do (Mark 1:20; Luke 5:10; 8:3; Matt. 27:56; John 19:27; 18:15). Nothing is said religiously of his father. His mother was a follower of Christ, and doubtless one of the women who contributed of their substance towards the sustenance of Christ (Luke 8:3; Mark 15:41). She followed Christ to the cross (19:25) and to the grave (Mark 16:1). She may have been related to Jesus—His mother's sister (John 19:25). This may account to some extent at least for the closeness of intimacy between Christ and John.

John as a Disciple of Christ.

Was a disciple of the Baptist (1:35)—one of the two which heard John speak and followed Jesus—Andrew was one, John, the other (1:40).

1. His call to discipleship.

Matt. 4:21, 22; Mark 1:19, 20; Luke 5:8-11. He was the first disciple and he was the last. And so thus heard the first and the last words the incarnate Word spoke to His Church.

2. His position in the Apostolic Circle.

It is interesting to note concerning John that he was one of the *many* disciples—John 1; Matt. 4.

That he was one of the *twelve*—Matt. 10.

That he was one of the *three*—Matt. 17.

(Note this inner circle of three alone admitted to the following:

The raising of Jairus' daughter—Mark 5:37; Luke 8:51.

The transfiguration—Matt. 17: Mark 9; Luke 9.

The agony in the garden—Mark 14; Luke 22; Matt. 26).

That he was one of the *two*—John 1:40.

That he was the *one*—John 13:23.

PECULIARITIES OF JOHN'S GOSPEL.

It is Reflective.

The other gospels are more in the form of narrative. John's Gospel pauses at almost every turn—now to give a reason, then to fix the attention, at another time to deduce consequences, or to make applications. See and compare 2:20, 21, 22, 25; 4:1, 2; 7:37-39; 11:12, 13, 49-52; 21:18, 19, 22, 23.

It is Supplementary.

It not only completes but confirms the Synoptic gospels. It omits much that the Synoptics record; and it records much that the Synoptics omit. Tradition has it that John was led to write this gospel at the request of the elders of the church in order to supplement the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke.

It Comprises All the Characteristics of the Synoptists:

Jesus as the Messiah (Matthew), 1:49; 4:25, 26; 18:36, 37.

Jesus as the Servant of God (Mark), 3:16; 5:30; 6:38; 17:4.

Jesus as the Son of Man (Luke), 6:54; 12:27; 19:30, 31; 11:34; 4:6; 19:28.

He presents Jesus Christ, above all, as the Son of God—as God made manifest in the flesh.

THE PURPOSE.

John 20:30, 31: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."

THE OUTLINE

PROLOGUE, 1:1-18.

Theme: "The Word."

Relation of "The Word":

1. To God. 1, 2.
2. To Creation. 3-5.
3. To Men. 4-18.

I. THE SELF-REVELATION OF JESUS TO THE WORLD, 1:19-12:50.

Contrasted effects. Unbelief triumphant. Christ rejected.

1. Private manifestation, 1:19-2:11. Chiefly to individuals.

a) To John the Baptist. (The witness of God.) 1:19-40.

b) To first disciples. (The witness of man.) 1:41-51.

c) At marriage in Cana. (The witness of nature.) 2:1-11.

Results: No opposition. The beginnings of faith.

Note: This period of private manifestation *closes with a miracle* (2:11).

2. **Public manifestation, 2:12-4:54.**

a) In Jerusalem. Temple, 2:12-22; city, 2:23-3:21.
b) In Judea. 3:22-36.
c) In Samaria. 4:1-42.
d) In Galilee. 4:43-54.

Results: While the progress in action and teaching is very noticeable, so are also the contrasted effects of faith and unbelief.

Note: Divisions 1 and 2 *end with a miracle* (sign), (2:11; 4:54).

3. **Fuller manifestation of Christ to the world, 5:1-12:50.**

a) As Life. 5:1-6:71.
b) As Truth. 7:1-8:11.
c) As Light. 8:12-9:41.
d) As Love. 10:1-42.
e) As Hope. 11:1-57.

Results: See chapter 12. As the *manifestations* were more marked, so were the *rejections*.

Chapter 12:37-44 contains a pause in which the writer considers the question of the rejection of Jesus by the Jews. Note:

The rejection stated (v. 37).

The cause of the rejection (vv. 38-43):

Not the insufficiency of Christ's manifestation (v. 41), but

The fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy as shown.

In the hardening of their hearts, etc.

Observe rejection of Christ as *Light* (12:36, 46), *Love* (12:47), *Truth* (12:49), *Life* (12:50) and *Hope* (12:50).

Note: Division 3 also *ends with a "sign"* (miracle) (11:1-44).

II. THE FULLER SELF-REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST TO "HIS OWN"—THE DISCIPLES, 13:1-17:26.

The growth and development of faith among the faithful few. Unbelief cast out from among them. The incarnate Word glorified among His own.

Note: Jesus does not now manifest Himself by "signs," but by discourses on deep spiritual themes (cf. 1 Cor. 14:22).

1. Love manifested.

a) In humble service. 13:1-7.

b) In overcoming and forcing out unbelief. 13:18-36.

c) In imparting words of deepest meaning, comfort and promise to the faithful few. 14:1-16:33.

d) In high priestly intercession. 17:1-26.

III. THE CLIMAX AND TRIUMPH OF UNBELIEF, 18:1-19:42.

The Crucifixion. Christ glorified through suffering.

1. The arrest of Jesus. 18:1-11.
2. Jesus before the high priest. 18:12-27.
3. Jesus before Pilate. 18:28-19:16.
4. The execution and burial. 19:17-42.

IV. THE CLIMAX AND TRIUMPH OF FAITH, 20:1-31: THE RESURRECTION.

1. Peter and John at the tomb. 20:1-10.
2. Mary Magdalene at the tomb. 20:11-18.
3. First appearance to the disciples. (Thomas absent.) 20:19-23.

4. Second appearance to the disciples. (Thomas present.) 20:24-29.
5. Conclusion. 20:30, 31.

EPILOGUE, 21:1-25.

The appearance of Christ by the Sea of Galilee. The Word triumphantly established in the faith and life of the disciples.

1. The draught of fishes. 21:1-8.
2. The prepared meal. 21:9-14.
3. Peter and John. (a) Peter, 15-19; (b) John, 20-23.
4. The Gospel attested. 21:24, 25.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

TITLE

"The Acts of the Apostles"; "The Gospel of the Holy Ghost"; "Book of the Diffusion of the Gospel"; "Book of Origins": first Christian church, apostolic miracle and sermon, church organization, Christian martyr, Gentile convert, European church.

AUTHOR

Luke, the physician; author of third gospel (cf. Luke 1:1-3 with Acts 1:1); eyewitness; companion and scribe of Paul (Colossians 4:14; Philemon 24; 2 Timothy 4:11).

TIME

Covering a space of 30 years, 30-61 A. D. from ascension of Christ (1:11) to imprisonment of Paul at Rome (28:30).

THEME

The Church of Christ described with respect to its founding, guidance and extension in Israel and among the Gentiles, from Jerusalem even unto Rome.

OBJECT OF THE BOOK

1. A personal letter to Theophilus, a noble and influential Greek, informing him of the events transpiring in the life of the early Church from the ascension of Christ to the imprisonment of Paul in Rome. (See Luke 1-24, from Christ's birth to His ascension).

2. Not a complete life of all the apostles, not even of Peter and Paul. The book is called "Practice of Apostles" ("the" omitted); cf. gospel, not a complete

life of Christ (John 20:30, 31). Peter not mentioned after chapter 15. No account of Paul's death; many of his persecutions and adventures omitted (cf. 2 Cor. 11:23-27).

3. To show the origin, growth, guidance and spread of Christian church through the instrumentality chiefly of Peter and Paul.

4. To show the intimate relationship existing between the Church of Christ and the Holy Ghost.

5. To show the true method of successful preaching and establishing of Christian churches.

RELATION TO THE GOSPELS

1. A grand commentary on the gospels; many things in the gospels wrapped up in dark sayings; in the Acts we learn much of our Saviour's meaning and teaching from character and life of Christians, dealings of the providence of God and the direct enlightenment of the divine and promised Spirit. What is in the gospels as prophecy, indication, type and parable, is in the Acts converted into fulfillment, fact and history.

GENERAL OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

I. THE ACTS OF PETER, 1-12.

1. Birth, foundation and progress of the Christian Church in Jerusalem and Judea, 1-8.

2. First persecution and extension of the Gospel to Samaria, (Cornelius), 8-9:18.

3. Second persecution and founding of the church at Antioch, 9:19-12:25.

Church-Jewish:

In Jerusalem, (2-7); In Palestine in general, (8-12).

II. THE ACTS OF PAUL, 13-28.

Activity of Paul, 13-20.
Captivity of Paul, 21-28.
1. Paul's call, 9:1-43.
2. First missionary journey, 13, 14.
3. Council at Jerusalem, fixing terms of admission to Gentile churches, 15:1-41.
4. Second missionary journey, 15:36-18:20.
5. Third missionary journey, 18:23-21:17.
6. Imprisonment at Cæsarea and voyage to Rome, 21:18-28.
Church-Gentile:
Uttermost part of the world, 13-28.

HINTS ON THE STUDY OF THE ACTS

1. Read the book through at one sitting. Do not attempt to remember anything of your reading.

2. Read a second time, chapter by chapter. Get the leading thought of the chapter. Write it down. Find the best verse.

3. Name each chapter and surround the name (which should be comprehensive and have some connection with the chapter preceding and following) with the lesser details of the chapter.

4. Read through again, with the special aim of getting the teaching on the great doctrinal and practical themes. For example, take up the topic of *Prayer*. Begin at chapter 1 and place a "P" opposite every verse that treats of prayer. After reading the twenty-eight chapters, take paper and pencil and summarize all you have learned on prayer, e. g.: 1. To whom to pray. 2. Where to pray. 3. Results of prayer. 4. How to pray, etc. Proceed in the same manner with other doctrines. You will thus be able to write a "Biblical" (even if not a dogmatic) theology of your own.

5. Study Paul's missionary journeys in connection with a good geography. Locate places.

6. Read some *Life of Paul.*

7. Whatever else you may do, do not forget to seek the Holy Spirit's guidance. The Acts is especially the Book of the Holy Spirit, so do not neglect Him.

THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

AUTHOR

Written by Paul while a prisoner in Rome (1:1, cf. 1:13, 14, 16; 4:22). Probably between 60 and 62 A. D. The bearer of the epistle was Epaphroditus (2:28, 29).

Paul's relation to the Philippian Church: He founded it (Acts 16); visited Philippi three times (Acts 16:20, 21; 2 Corinthians 2:12, 13; 7:5, 6; Acts 20:2, 3, 6); and was a constant recipient of its bounty (1:5; 2:25; 4:18; 2 Corinthians 11:9).

THE OCCASION

1. Contributions made to the apostle, 2:25; 4:18.
2. Encouragement with reference to the sickness of Epaphroditus, 2:26, 27, 30.
3. A letter of thanksgiving for gifts sent to the apostle, 2:25; 4:18.
4. To correct certain errors of practice, and exhort to certain Christian virtues, 1:27; 2:1-3; 4:1, 2.
5. To convey information regarding his own state, 1:30; 2:28; 1:25, 26; 2:24.

THE OUTLINE

I. THE PROLOGUE, 1:1-11.

1. Address and greeting, 1:1, 2.
2. Thanksgiving, 1:3-5.
3. Commendation and prayer, 1:6-11.

II. THE APOSTLE'S PERSONAL STATE, 1:12-26.

1. Personal experiences—Effects on others, 1:12-18.
2. Personal prospects—Effects on others, 1:19-26.

(Exhortation—1:27-30).

III. EXHORTATION TO CHRISTLIKENESS, 2:1-30.

1. Unity and love, 2:1-4.
2. Humiliation and exaltation, 2:5-11.
3. Consistent living, 2:12-18.
4. Ministerial helpers, 2:19-30.

IV. WARNINGS AGAINST FALSE TEACHERS, 3:1-4:1.

1. Judaism, 3:1-11.
2. Perfectionism, 3:12-16.
3. Libertinism, 3:17-4:1.

V. CONCLUDING EXHORTATIONS AND GREETINGS, 4:2-23.

1. Exhortations:

   a) To reconciliation, 4:1-3.
   b) To Christian graces, 4:4-7.
   c) To Christian virtues, 4:8, 9.

2. Greetings:

   a) Gratitude and generosity, 4:10-20.
   b) Greetings proper, 4:21-23.

EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Theme: The Supremacy and Sufficiency of Jesus Christ and His Redemptive Work.

INTRODUCTORY

AUTHOR

The letter to the Colossians was written by Paul the Apostle during his imprisonment at Rome.

OCCASION OF WRITING

Paul had received a visit during his imprisonment from a Colossian Christian named Epaphras, who, doubtless, was the founder of the church at Colosse, for Paul himself had never been at Colosse. Of this there seems to be no doubt. The presumability is that converts of Paul went down to Colosse and established the church there. At all events Paul is acquainted with many of the church members of that place. Epaphras makes the visit to Rome and while there acquaints Paul with the affairs of the church at Colosse.

In the first place, he tells him of its growth, and this at once raises gratitude in the heart of Paul; then of the false teachers who were proclaiming false doctrines. This naturally brings sorrow to the heart of Paul. So we may say that the purpose of the letter is, first of all, to compliment the Colossians on their growth in grace, and to then warn them against false teaching.

The form the false teaching assumed, and the one dread that came to the apostle was, that Jesus Christ should not have the preëminence He ought to have in the hearts of the Christians in Colosse. One feature of the false teaching was that the world was created, not by God, but by successive æons. Jesus Christ was simply one of these æons, one of these intermediate

beings, consequently Jesus Christ was put into the background and His position of headship denied. The Colossians were being taught to worship God through angels. They said that in order to grow strong in the Christian life it was necessary to seek other knowledge than that contained in God's revealed Word. Thus the supremacy and sufficiency of Jesus Christ and His redemptive work was challenged.

Colossians and Ephesians compared. The letter to the Colossians differs from the letter to the Ephesians in this: "Ephesians treats of the Church as the fullness of Christ; the Colossians, of Christ as the fullness of God. Ephesians deals with the Church as the body of Christ—the doctrine of the Church: Colossians deals with Christ as the Head of the Church—the doctrine of the Christ.

OUTLINE

I. INTRODUCTION, 1:1-14.

1. Salutation, 1:1, 2.
2. The apostle's thanksgiving for the faith, hope and love of the Colossian Christians, 1:3-8.
3. The prayer of the apostle for a deeper knowledge of the grace of God, and a walk not only more intelligent but more worthy of the Lord, 1:9-14.

II. THE MAIN THEME OF THE EPISTLE—THE PREEMINENCE OF CHRIST, AND HIS REDEMPTIVE WORK, 1:15-23.

1. Christ's relation to God—"The image of the invisible God" (verse 15).
2. Christ's relation to the natural creation, the universe.

He is prior to, sovereign over, and distinct from the creation. He is the Creator of the universe (verses

15-17). This was a blow at the false (Gnostic) teaching which had entered into the Colossian Church.

3. Christ's relation to the moral creation—the Church (vêrses 18-23).

He is the Head of the Church, the first-born or first-fruits of the Christian dead. He is the one who alone has the preëminence, and He is, finally, the depository of all the fullness of the Father for the Church. He is the Redeemer and Deliverer of the Church.

4. In 1:24 to 2:7 we have a personal reference by the apostle in which he, in a sense, apologizes for the liberty he takes in writing to the Colossian Christians whom he has not seen and whose church he did not personally organize. He bases his right to write to them on the great fact that to him has been committed the Gospel to the Gentiles.

III. WARNING AGAINST THE FALSE TEACHERS AND THEIR DOCTRINE, 2:2-23.

Note here that he warns them:

1. Against limiting the sufficiency of Christ and His redemptive work, and the Christian's completeness in Him, 2:2-15.

2. Against the claims of the false teachers—substituting legalism, ceremonialism and asceticism for true religion. He also warns them against angel mediatorship, setting forth the fact that Christ is the only mediator between God and man, 2:16-23.

IV. THE TRUE CHRISTIAN LIFE DESCRIBED, 3:1-4:1.

1. Christian life described in general as a "risen life," 3:1-3.

The believer has risen, ascended, and is now seated with his risen Lord in the place of power.

2. The Christian life presented from its negative side.

We are here told to put off the vices of the old life, which are quite fully described as not only sins of the flesh, but also of the mind, 3:4-11.

3. The Christian life is described in its positive aspect—the virtues that are to be put on, 3:12-15.

4. The apostle describes as the leading principle of the Christian life which consists in the indwelling Word, thankfulness, and a life lived in the will of God, 3:16, 17.

5. The Christian life is set forth in the various relationships of life: husbands and wives, children and parents, servants and masters should conduct themselves as followers of Jesus Christ, 3:18-4:1.

V. THE CONCLUSION, 4:2-18.

1. Description of the Christian life (verses 2-6) as a life of prayer, a wise use of opportunities, and a worthy and graceful walk, 4:2-6.

2. Personal mentions by the apostle, 4:7-18.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

Theme: CHRISTIANITY SUPERIOR TO JUDAISM

A. DOCTRINAL DISCUSSION OF THE THEME.

Introduction, 1:1-3.

The introduction is the seed-plot of the whole doctrinal discussion, all the main divisions being found here, viz.: the supra-prophetical, the supra-angelical, and the supra-levitical dignity of Jesus Christ, the Mediator, Priest, and Surety of Christianity, the "new" and "better" covenant. The important phases of the person and work of Christ, as afterwards discussed, are here briefly mentioned.

The two Dispensations—Jewish and Christian.

Judaism and Christianity are both treated of in these introductory verses. The things which they have in common, and the things in which they are in contrast are set forth.

Things in Common to both Testaments.

The same God reveals Himself in and speaks through both Testaments: in the Old, through the prophets; in the New, through a (or the) Son. Both Covenants deal with the one problem—the redemption of the race from sin. Thus we have a unity of authorship even though a diversity of writers.

Both Testaments further maintain a close and vital connection with each other. It has been well said that the New is in the Old contained, and the Old is in the New explained; the New is in the Old enfolded, and the Old is in the New unfolded; the New is in the Old concealed, and the Old is in the New revealed.

What is the Law but the Gospel foreshadowed? What is the Gospel but the Law fulfilled? It is folly, therefore, to neglect the Old Testament, for the New Testament is thereby robbed of its beauty.

God hath Spoken.

This fact in itself is exceedingly important. God has spoken to man, finally and supremely, in His Son, in the New Testament. The Old Testament also is the oracle of God, and Romans 9 is a confirmation of this truth.

It is both interesting and instructive to notice the prominence here given to the divine authorship and inspiration of the Scriptures. To the writer of this epistle the Scriptures are always the Word of God and not the words of men. It is for this reason that the human authorship of so many quotations is passed by, the emphasis being laid is upon the fact of divine authorship. So we read:

"One in a certain place testifieth" (2:6).
"Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith" (3:7).
"For he (God) spake in a certain place" (4:4).
"And in this place again" (4:5).
"And he saith also in another place" (5:6).
"Above when he said" (10:8).

Even when exception to this rule is made, and a human writer is named (e. g., 4:7), particular care is taken to state that it was the Holy Spirit who was speaking in and through him.

The Bible as a whole, in both its Testaments, is a revelation of the mind of God to man, and not, as is sometimes affirmed by those who deny the inspiration of the Scriptures, an expression of the mind of man about God. The former view gives authority to the message; the latter but engenders speculations regarding the deepest matters of the soul.

The Two Testaments in Contrast.

Certain things in the two dispensations are contrasted. The one revelation of the New Testament is contrasted with the many (or fragmentary) revelations of the Old Testament.

OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT
Many revelations.	One revelation.
Many media (prophets).	One medium (Son).
Through prophets.	Through a Son.
Imperfect men.	Perfect Son.
Temporary.	Eternal.

The Supremacy of the New Testament.

While the reality of the Old Testament is fully recognized, the supremacy of the New is acknowledged. The New Testament is the final and supreme revelation of God to men. It is the *ne plus ultra* of God's message to the world. There is nothing in the nature of a revelation from God for the age in which we live —"these last days"—beyond the revelation in the New Testament; it is, authoritative, complete, final. All that God has to say to this age is summed up in the one word "Jesus." The New Testament is preeminently "the book of Jesus Christ" (Matt.: 1:1). The final authority in matters of faith and practice—God's final message to the men of this age—lies in the New Testament, yea, the whole revelation of God as found in *both* Testaments, for the Old speaks of Christ (Luke 24:27, 44) even as does the New.

Christ in Various Relationships.

In these introductory verses is set forth the relation of Jesus Christ, the Son of God:

(1) To the physical universe—"made the world": "upholds all things."

(2) To the moral creation (the Church)—purchased it with His own blood.

(3) To the Father—"express image of his person," "the brightness of his glory."

I. CHRISTIANITY HAS A BETTER MEDIATOR THAN JUDAISM, 1:4-4:16.

The mediators of the Old Covenant were angels, Moses, and, in a limited sense, Joshua. Jesus Christ is the Mediator of the New Covenant. The writer, in this section, shows the superiority of Christ as Mediator over angels, Moses, and Joshua.

1. Christ is greater than angels, 1:4-2:18.

It was the Jewish belief that the Mosaic economy or dispensation was introduced by angels (Acts 7:53; Galatians 3:19), hence the first comparison here is between Christ and angels. If Christ is greater than angels, so is the revelation which He brought greater than that brought by angels. The superiority of Christ over angels is set forth as follows:

a) Greater in name, 1:4, 5. They are but messengers; He is the Son.

b) Greater in homage, 1:6. Angels worship Him.

c) Greater in nature, 1:7, 8. Angels and their work are subject to change; Christ is immutable. They are servants; He is God.

d) Greater in relationship, 1:8-14. Angels are creatures; He is Creator.*

e) Greater in position, 2:5-18. Angels are subject

*Even as Man Jesus is exalted above angels, so are we in Him, hence the control of the age to come is given not to angels but to man. The smallest child is greater than the highest servant (or angel). For this reason both the sanctifier and the sanctified are gone—they are alike from the Father. What a wonderful brotherhood! "My Father and your Father, my God and your God," (John 20:17). Here is brotherhood, not friendship. Friendship may be lost, but brotherhood is fixed, unchangeable, unalterable.

to His dominion; they are servants in the kingdom; He is ruler on the throne.

f) Greater in ministry, 1:8, 14; cf. vv. 3, 4. Angels minister in physical things; Christ in the moral and spiritual realm.

In this argument for the superiority of Christ over angels seven quotations from the Old Testament are found, all of them bearing on the subject under discussion, namely, that Christ is greater than angels. Six of these quotations are from the Psalms, and one from 2 Samuel. Who would have thought that some of the Psalms here quoted (2, 97, 104, 45, 102, 90) were Messianic, unless the Holy Spirit had thus told us that such is the case?

These seven quotations are woven around four questions, three of which may be answered by "No," the other by "Yes." (1) "To which of the angels did he say at any time, thou are my Son?" v. 5. The answer is, "To none." (2) "To which of the angels.... I will be to him a Father?" etc. "None." (3) "To which....sit thou on my right hand?" "None." (4) "Are they not all ministering spirits?" "Yes." Dignity they have, but they are not equal to the Son. Here surely is an unanswerable argument for the deity of Christ.

The first two quotations show that Christ is superior to the angels in His relationship to God; the third, that angels are commanded to worship Christ the Son; the fourth, fifth, and sixth contrast the work of angels with that of the Son; the seventh declares that the Son shares the throne, while angels are but servants who minister around the throne.

2. For a little while Christ was made less than angels in order that He might accomplish the work of redemption, 2:5-18.

Reference is here made to the incarnation, which

Christ undertook in order that He might pay the penalty due to our sin, which is death—physical death of course, the death over which Satan had power and which had held men in bondage, cf. 2:14, 15, there is a certain righteousness in Satan's claim; but also, and perchance more deeply, to be forsaken of God, for to be left without God is death; to be in the hands of the hour and power of darkness is death. Some scholars would translate the word "grace" (found in 2:9: "that he by the grace of God should taste of death") "apart" and thus read, 'that he, separated or apart from God should (thus) taste death for every man," (cf. Jesus' words, "My God....why has thou forsaken me?") The humiliation, however, was but temporary, for the Son has been exalted, and is now expecting the final subjugation of all things to Himself. Christ tasted of death "for every man." This means that while we have been pardoned, our sins have been punished. We are forgiven, but our sins never, that is, not in the sense of unconditionally remitting their punishment. All our sins were laid on Jesus and punished in Him. Sin was condemned in His flesh. Christ neutralized death and him (Satan) that had the power over it; He removed its sting, so that evermore the believer is delivered from its fear and bondage. We shall not see death. Why then should we be afraid of that which we cannot see? We must pass through the dissolution of soul and body, but the sting is gone.

The incarnation was an act becoming to Jesus Christ (2:17), to God (2:10), and to man (2:14). It was not beneath God to thus step down and take upon Him our nature (Phil. 2:5-8). It was as congruous to God as it was suitable to and necessary for man. To the Father, to be able, through the death of Christ, "to lead many sons unto glory," was worth the price paid. In providing for the human race for evermore, through

the incarnation, a merciful and a faithful priest who could help the suffering and sinning sons of men, seemed to the Father, as well as to the Son, a fitting and congruous thing to do. It was becoming, too, that God should become man, if thereby the power of death, which Satan held in his control, should be wrested from him (2:14). So that in all things—pertaining to God, to Christ, to man, yea, even to Satan, it was a fitting thing, a thing not by any means beneath God, to undertake, in this way, the redemption of His people.

All the attributes and perfections of the divine nature harmonized in the incarnation—His wisdom and His mercy, His justice and His holiness, His power and His truth—in the act of God becoming man there was no conflict of one attribute with another, nor did one triumph over another. There was "no prodigality which infinite wisdom could reprove; no facility which infinite holiness could challenge; there was a common rejoicing of all God's attributes in their common and harmonious exercise. In His mercy He was righteous, in His justice He was merciful, in His wisdom He was strong, in His power He was patient."

Exhortation in the midst of argument, 2:1-4; cf. 13:19, 22.

It is a striking characteristic of this epistle, that right in the midst of an argument the writer stops to exhort (cf. 4:11-16; 5:11-6:20, etc.). These exhortations are based upon the preceding arguments, just as in this case (2:1-4): inasmuch as the Gospel dispensation is so much superior to the Mosaic, see that there be no disobedience to its teachings; the punishment for such disobedience will be more sure and severe than that which was visited upon the offender of the Old Testament economy (cf. 10:28, 29).

It is worthy of note that the exhortations of this epistle are based upon the experience and history of the children of Israel, probably because this epistle was written, as its name indicates, to Hebrew Christians:

(1) At Sinai, 2:1-4.
(2) The wilderness journey, 3:7-4:16.
(3) Canaan.
(4) The temple and its sprinkled blood, 10:26-39.
(5) The heavenly Jerusalem, 12:8-29.

Another peculiarity of the exhortations of this epistle is that the form in which they occur, namely, "Let us," usually follows the words "Having" or "Having therefore" (cf. 2:1, 2; 4:14-16; 10:19-25; 12:1, 2).

"LET US" (12 times)

(1) Fear, 4:1.
(2) Give diligence, 4:11, R.V.
(3) Hold fast, 4:14.
(4) Come boldly, 4:16.
(5) Press on, 6:1.
(6) Draw near, 10:22.
(7) Consider one another, 10:24.
(8) Run the race, 12:1.
(9) Lay aside, 12:1.
(10) Have grace, 12:28.
(11) Go forth, 13:13.
(12) Offer sacrifices, 13:15.

A Seven-fold Warning of the Epistle.

(1) The danger of lost contact, 2:1, R.V.: "Lest haply we drift away."

(2) The danger of lost distance, 3:12, R.V.: "Falling away from the living God."

(3) The danger of resistance, 3:13: "Hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

(4) The danger of exclusion, 4:1: "Lest anyone ....should seem to come short of it."

(5) The danger of a fall, 4:11: "That no man fall after....disobedience."

(6) The danger of a collapse, 12:3, R.V.: "That ye wax not weary, fainting in your souls."

(7) The danger of bad influence, 12:13, 15, 16, R.V.: "Lest many thereby be defiled."

FIVE DON'TS

(1) Don't drift, 2:1-4, R.V.
(2) Don't deny, 3:7-4:13.
(3) Don't be dull, 5:11-6:20.
(4) Don't despise, 10:26-39.
(5) Don't depart, 12:25-29.

The whole epistle is characterized by a long list of warnings against drifting. There is a continual call to perseverance (see 2:18; 3:12, 13; 4:1, 14-16; 6:12; 10:19-25, 39; 11; 12:1, 2, 12, 15; 13:8, 9). Warnings introduced by the word "lest" occur eleven times: 2:1; 3:12, 13; 4:1, 11; 11:28; 12:3, 13, 15, 16. Every occurrence of "therefore" is also a warning.

3. **Christ is greater than Moses (who led the people out of Egypt) and Joshua (who led the people into Canaan), 3:1-4:16.**

We can scarcely appreciate the high position which Moses occupied in the estimation of the Jew. The Law was given by Moses; the basis of Judaism was laid by Moses. In a very real sense Moses was the father of the Jewish nation, particularly from the religious point of view—and the Jew was more of a religious than a national being, indeed, his religion was his national trait. Even as a prophet, Moses was different and greater than all other prophets for God spoke to him face to face (Num. 12:6-8, cf. Deut. 18:15). Moses was the builder of the house of Judaism (3:3-6).

a) Christ is greater than Moses inasmuch as Moses, although faithful in all that God told him to do, was nevertheless but a *servant* in that house.

Indeed, Moses was but a part of the household, while Christ, who, as Moses, was likewise faithful, was the *builder* of the house. He was the Son, not the servant. Moses was but a prophet pointing to the Son who should come later and build the household of faith of which he (Moses) himself was but a part with the rest of the children of men for whose salvation Christ came into the world.

If faith rested on the pattern of things as set forth in the sacrificial economy of the Tabernacle, how much more in the person of Him who is the substance?

Moses was ready to die for the nation, Christ did die for it. Note that it is the *faithfulness* of Moses that is here praised. There were many other strong points and striking virtues in Moses' life and character (his meekness, for example, Num. 12:3), but special mention is made here, not of his gifts or talents, but of that to which we all may attain unto, viz: his faithfulness.

Believers in Christ are here likened (3:2-6) to a household of God (cf. Eph. 2:19-22) for the continuance of membership in which we are exhorted to "hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (3:6). To "hold fast" our hope means to cherish it, to look forward constantly to the coming day when our hope shall be swallowed up in the fulness of fruition, to have confidence in God that He will preserve and sustain us until that great day (1 Peter 1:5). We must never loosen our hold or grip upon that glorious hope, even the coming of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13, 14). We need hope just as we need faith to save us (Rom. 8:24), for while we are admitted "by faith into this grace wherein we stand," we yet "rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:2). To fail to hold fast to this hope is to court backsliding. What an influ-

ence, a practical influence and power then is to be found in the doctrine of the Second Coming of our Lord! This hope is not an idle, vain dream, but a powerful incentive to holiness, nor will it be an idle disappointment (1 John 3:2, 3).

b) Further, Moses, as the leader of the children of Israel, was unable to lead them into the land of rest. Joshua also (4:8), while he was able to lead them into Caanan was nevertheless unable to give the people real rest. Christ does lead His people into rest, and hence, is greater than either Moses or Joshua (3:7-4:10). Christ gives true soul-rest to all those who believe in Him and follow Him.

Exhortation to enter into the rest, 3:12-4:11.

It seems natural, after speaking of the faithfulness of Moses, that the writer should now speak of the unfaithfulness of the children of Israel. If the fathers failed, how careful should we be (cf. 1 Cor. 10:1-13)? Where many have fallen, there is cause for us to fear. The Israelites were children of the Covenant, followers of Moses, but because they proved unfaithful they did not enter into the promised rest. So we, believers in Christ, are children of the New Covenant, followers of the greater Leader than Moses, yet, if we prove unfaithful and do not persevere unto the end, there is great danger lest we shall miss that rest also—that Sabbath-rest of God, of which He has made His people partakers. If the Israelites were shut out of the promised land because of disobedience to the word of a servant, how much more shall we be if we are disobedient to the word of the Son of God?

When God speaks, our *hearts* should respond; if they do not thus respond to the divine voice hardness of heart will follow (4:7). It is one thing to receive

the Word of God with the intellect and imagination, to have a response of the will to that Word, and an altogether different thing to have the heart respond to it. The moment this kind of heart-failure takes place, the hardening process commences. Failure in the Christian life comes from not receiving the Word in *faith* (4:2). When the heart is in this hardened condition, it is impossible for it to receive the Word, that is, to mix the message with faith. This being the case, there can be no rest of soul and so, because of unbelief, we, like Israel, cannot inherit the promised blessing. The rain may fall on a roof, and yet it will produce no lasting effect, but let that rain fall upon good ground, on soil that is ready to receive it, and what a rich, bountiful harvest will follow!

"Harden not your hearts." It is out of the heart that all thoughts and affections proceed. The heart is the center of our spiritual being; all sin begins there —"They do alway err in their heart" (3:10). Unbelief in heart is the cause of departure from God (3:12).

We pray and sing, "Nearer, my God, to Thee"; "Draw me nearer, blessed Lord," and the reply of the Master to our hymn and prayer is, "Only believe; I am near you when you believe." "Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down); or, Who shall descend into the abyss? —that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what saith it? The word is nigh thee .... in thy heart" (Rom. 10:6-8, R.V.). Why did Israel not enter Canaan? Was it because of the sin of worshiping the golden calf, or for the sin on the plains of Moab? No, but because of unbelief. We are saved by faith; we are lost by unbelief. It was unbelief that turned the garden of Eden into a wilderness (Gen. 3); it is faith that transforms the wilderness into a garden (Rev. 20-22).

"Not mixed with faith." No matter how true and blessed are the promises of God, they cannot be of benefit and blessing to us until we make them our own. The sin of Israel consisted in this: That they did not claim God's promise of rest as their own (4:6, 8), and thus an unbelieving heart became an evil heart.

"Let us fear." What do these words signify? Is not fear incompatible with loving confidence in a God who is able both to save and to keep? Does not the apostle say that "We have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear" (Rom. 8:15)? Is there not something of the nature of incompatibility between the perfect trust which cries out in joyous acclamation that nothing shall "separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:39), and the element of fear? Yet, was not Noah moved by fear (Heb. 11:7)? Are we not commanded to "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12), and to "pass the time of our sojourning in fear" (1 Peter 1:17)? While all this is true, it must, nevertheless, be borne in mind that the fear here inculcated is not the fear of the sinner, but that which belongeth to the saint; it is the fear of faith, not of unbelief; it is a "godly" fear (Heb. 11:7); it is not a fear of impending punishment, but an earnest solicitude lest by sinning we should offend God. It is the fear of a loving child for a loving parent.

Rest—its Meaning.

We have a four-fold rest here described:

(1) Creation rest, 4:4.
(2) Canaan rest, 4:9.
(3) Christian rest, 4:3.
(4) Celestial rest, 4:9.

In addition, the New Testament presents the idea of "Rest" from a three-fold viewpoint:

(1) A Rest *given*, Matt. 11:28.
For the troubled *conscience*. This is a rest given instantly (Heb. 4:10), a rest from the burden and futility of dead works, instantly granted the moment a man believes in Christ.

(2) A Rest *found*, Matt. 11:30.
For the troubled *heart*. A rest to be continually appropriated and enjoyed as emergencies arise.

(3) A Rest *remaining*, Heb. 4:9.
For the troubled *body, soul*, and *spirit*. The word for rest in this passage differs from that used in 4:3, 4, 7. It signifies a "sabbath-keeping," and points back to the original rest—the ideal rest which comes to us at the close of life's weary day.

Three-fold Aspect of Salvation.

The salvation which Christ has procured for the believer has been presented, up to this point, in a three-fold way:

(1) Dominion in the age to come, 2:5-11.
(2) Victory over death and deliverance from its fear, 2:14, 15.
(3) Participation in the divine rest, 4:1-11.
aa) The promise of rest made to Moses and Joshua (4:4, 8), renewed again in time of David (4:7), and still again in Hebrews (4:7-9).
bb) Confirmation of the promise (4:1-11).
cc) Responsibility (4:11; cf. Eph. 4:3).

The Word of God our Critic (4:12).

Having shown that the exhortation to faith in the promise of God is based on the Scriptures, the writer now proceeds to show the place and power of the Word of God, which will reveal to us any hidden sin that may be in our hearts and endanger our enjoyment of God's promised rest. The Word of God is "living and active" (or energizing); it has life-giving power;

it never remains inert or inactive in any heart that receives it, being the Word of the living God (see 1 Peter 1:23). The Word is "sharper than any two-edged sword," etc., that is to say, it has incisive and penetrative powers, it lays bare self-delusions and moral sophisms. This verse is not intended to set forth a study in spiritual psychology, but to show that just as a sword cuts through the joints and marrow of the body, so the Word of God penetrates into the innermost recesses of our spiritual being. Discriminating and judging power concerning the actions of men is here ascribed to the Word of God. Nowhere in the Bible are men represented as being critics of the Word of God, but always and everywhere is the Word of God set forth as the critic of the actions, ponderings, meditations, thinking, definite conceptions, and determinations of men.

The Omniscience of God (4:13).

The thought of the all-penetrating power of the Word of God leads naturally to the thought of God's omniscience. He knows all about us. Just as the severed victim on the altar lies fully exposed to the view of the priest, so do our lives lie open to Him with whom is our reckoning. What folly then to seek to hide from Him some hidden or secret sin!

The Sympathy of our great High Priest (4:14-16).

Not only will the sin that would hinder our inheriting the promised rest be brought to view by the all-penetrating power of God and His Word, but power to overcome that sin is assured because of the fact that we have in heaven a great High Priest who has been tempted, yet without sin, and has triumphed vic-

toriously over evil and is now on the throne to give that heart-rest to those who trust Him.

Exhortation, 4:14-16.

1. Its Encouragement.

The encouragement of the exhortation is based on the fact that we have a great High Priest—One who can do much more for us than the Aaronic high priest —Jesus, the Son of God. *Jesus,* setting forth His human sympathy for us as further illustrated by His enduring suffering and temptation in all points; *Son of God,* indicating His power to succor us during temptation, because He, by His might and power overcame His and our spiritual foes (Col. 2:15) when He passed through the heavens (Eph. 6:9-12), and took His place at the right hand of the Father in order to be able to fulfill for and to His people the promise of rest (4:1-11). Our Priest is *great* because of what He is in heaven; *sympathetic* because of what He was on earth.

Sympathy and Sinlessness.

It is said (4:14-16) that our great High Priest was tempted, tried, and tested, yet remained sinless amid it all. In a strange way the sympathy and sinlessness of Jesus are associated, and that with a view to our encouragement. The question naturally arises, how can a sinless being sympathize with the sinful and sinning sons of men? The answer to this question is the serious problem which confronts us in the New Testament, and for the solution of which Jesus was put to the test. Had Jesus failed in the test He would then have been a sinful being Himself, one of us and like us, and utterly unable to lift us up above sin's

dominion. How hopeless then would our case have been! Our hope lies in the great fact of His victory.

To sin is not absolutely necessary in order to have sympathy with and be helpful to sinful men. Is the best physician the one who himself has had all the diseases, or the one who, understanding them best, can thus treat them successfully? Is it necessary that a man be a great criminal before he can understand the law and become a sympathetic and helpful judge? No. The best doctor is the one who can treat disease with the greatest success; the best judge is the man who knows and can administer the law in the best manner.

Some think it impossible to suffer in being tempted unless there is a yielding to the temptation. But surely this cannot be so. Take a pure, sweet, innocent virgin, and place her in the midst of a scene of the grossest immorality; take also a loose, profligate, abandoned woman and place her in the same environment, who do you think suffers most amid the temptation to evil, the virgin or the profligate? The virgin certainly. Temptation always makes its appeal to the good—the bad do not resist, they yield to the temptation without the struggle. And so it comes to pass that after all it is only the good man, and not the bad man at all, that is really tempted. He who yields to sin feels it the least, he who resists the temptation feels it the most. It was because Jesus remained sinless that He suffered in being tempted.

The temptations of Christ were real. The temptation in the wilderness was no phantasmagoria, it was a real event. Jesus not only knows our needs, but feels them too—He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities,—our infirmities, not our sins, for it was impossible for Christ, the Son of God, to sin; He was tempted in all points as we are, yet "apart from sin."

2. **Its nature.**

"Hold fast our confession." Our confession means the profession of our faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the divinely-appointed Redeemer of the world (cf. 3:1). We are to let nothing shake our confidence in the Son and His finished work.

"Come boldly unto the throne of grace." We are exhorted to exercise the right of freedom of speech, an unburdening of our hearts before the throne of grace. We need hold nothing back. We are to come with freedom right up to the face and presence of God. This we are to do constantly, habitually, we are to "keep coming boldly." We must rest assured that our prayers reach the ear of our Elder Brother who sits upon that throne.

"The throne of grace." This is God's throne—the throne of justice and judgment, now transfigured by the work of the Son into the throne of grace. Here we are to find "mercy" for our past sins, and "grace," seasonable grace to keep us from repeating those sins. As Christ won this victory over sin, so must we. There is to be no lower standard for us than for Him. The sympathy of our High Priest is with the sinner, not with his sin. The believer in Christ may be kept free from wilful known sin (1 John 2:1; 1:5-7; John 5:14; Rom. 8:2).

Another characteristic of the Epistle: An intimation of the theme that is to follow, 4:14-16 (cf. 2:17-3:1).

Another characteristic of this epistle is that the writer hints, at the conclusion of an argument, what is to be the *line of thought* he will take up in the following argument. In this case (4:14-16) we have a brief mention of the priesthood of Christ, which is the theme of the next great division of the epistle

(5:1-8:5). How great should be our joy in having so great (the greatness will appear later) a High Priest as Jesus Christ is! Indeed this theme was already hinted at even before the comparison between Christ and Moses (cf. 2:17-3:1—"Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Jesus Christ").

Note here also a hint as to the *method* of the argument that is to follow: The great High Priest is "Jesus, the Son of God." "Jesus"—indicating the human side of Christ's priesthood, His power to sympathize. This is treated of in 5:1-9 (cf. c. 2). "Son of God"—indicating the divine side of Christ's priesthood, its power, etc. This is treated of in 5:11-7:25 (cf. c. 1). The Christ, the Son of God, of chapter 1, and Jesus, God incarnate, of chapter 2; this God-Man, perfectly fitted for His work, is our great High Priest.

Even in so brief a mention of the theme of Christ's priesthood as we find here the writer cannot pass on to the fuller discussion until he has inserted a brief exhortation. We are to "consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Jesus Christ" (3:1). "Consider" is a very remarkable word. It means to ponder, to attentively consider. It is used only once more in the epistle (10:24—"Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works"). We are to consider "Christ," and "one another." It is because we fail to take time to consider one another that we oft-times, in our endeavor to be helpful to our brethren, provoke them to anger instead of to good works. And so it is because we do not thus thoughtfully ponder on the great truths of the person and work of our great High Priest that we come so far short in our Christian lives.

Christ is both Apostle and High Priest. An apostle

is one who represents God to man, who is sent from God to man. A priest is one who represents man to God, who is appointed to go before God in the behalf of man. Jesus Christ, our great High Priest, does both.

II. CHRISTIANITY HAS A BETTER PRIESTHOOD THAN JUDAISM, 5:1-8:6.

This section, dealing with the priesthood of Christ, is perhaps the central and most important part of the Epistle, for the priestly work of Christ is the main theme of Hebrews. In this connection it may be interesting to note that the words "priest" and "priests" are referred to ten times; "priesthood," five times; "high priest" and "great high priest," seventeen times. The word "high priest" does not occur in any other epistle. This fact is further evident when it is remembered that the argument for the priesthood of Christ here stated is a continuation of the argument not merely from 4:14-16, or even 3:1, in which place this topic is touched upon, but in reality from the first mention in 2:17. In chapter 5, verses 1-9, we have but a further reason given for the statement in 2:17 and 4:14-16 that our High Priest is human and, therefore, sympathetic and helpful.

The Jews attached the very highest importance to their priesthood and sacrifices. The writer endeavors to show how much superior is the priesthood and sacrifice of Christ. The Hebrew Christians had not thought much, if at all, of Christ as a Priest. He was not descended from the priestly line. He did not minister in the temple; He exercised no priestly functions; He was not reckoned among, nor did He identify Himself with the priests while in the days of His flesh, consequently He did not seem to them to be of the priestly order.

The writer of the Hebrews shows in this section that Christ is a Priest, that He has all the qualifications, both human and divine; indeed, that His priesthood is vastly superior to that of Aaron in nature, descent, and rank.

1. Qualities which Christ has in common with the Aaronic Priests, 5:1-6:20.

The high priest must be human so as to be able to sympathize with those for whom he pleads. He must be appointed by God, for no man may take this honor unto himself. He is appointed to represent the people before God and for that reason offers up sacrifices in their behalf, and, because, he is sinful himself, must offer for his own sin too (5:1-4).

So Christ was made like unto these priests in that He was human, divinely appointed to represent man to God by offering a sacrifice, even Himself, for them, but not, as in the case of the Levitical priests, for Himself, for He was sinless. Further, Christ's priesthood was perfected by the suffering which He endured, and by reason of which He was able fully to sympathize with the suffering people whom He represented before the Father (5:5-10). Because of His more perfect priesthood and sacrifice Christ became the author of eternal salvation.

a) A high priest must be chosen from among men (5:1).

That is to say, he must be human in order that he may be able to sympathize with those in whose behalf he intercedes. His kinship with his fellows enables him to have "compassion" on them (5:2), and by reason of which the attitude he assumes towards, and the judgments he pronounces upon them will be neither too severe nor too lenient. A high priest "must not be

betrayed into irritation at sin and ignorance, nor weakly indulgent." The fact that "he himself is compassed about with infirmity" (5:2), i. e., he himself possesses moral weakness which made him capable of sinning.

So Christ, as our great High Priest, is human in all necessary human respects, except, of course, that He is not compassed about with moral weakness—from this He is, of course, absolutely exempt, He is "apart from sin" (cf. 7:26-28; 4:15).

b) A high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sin (5:1).

Probably the bloody and unbloody offerings are referred to by the terms "gifts" and "sacrifices." The high priest is one who intercedes with God in the behalf of men (5:1). A prophet (or an apostle) is one who intercedes with men in behalf of God (Exod. 7:1). Christ is both High Priest and Apostle (3:1). As a Priest, He offered up the sacrifice of Himself, and is the representation of men to God. As an Apostle, (or Prophet), He is the One sent from God to represent Him to the sons of men and plead with them in the behalf of God.

c) The high priest was ordained to his office by divine appointment (5:4).

No man chose the office for himself, probably because of the fact that the man himself was so conscious of his own imperfections that he feared to assume so responsible a position. This idea of excluding self-choice would act as a check in the case of any over ambitious man. Christ fulfilled these conditions of the high priesthood, and He was appointed and set apart for this office by God, by a divine oath (5:5). This fact the author substantiates by a two-fold reference to the Scriptures (Psa. 2:7; 110:4).

A careful study of these references would seem to indicate that Christ's introduction into the office of High Priest took place at the time of His resurrection from the dead. The reference to "the days of his flesh" (5:7-10) points to the scene in the garden of Gethsemane and deals particularly with the prayer of Christ offered to the Father while there. The substance of the prayer was that the Father might save Him "out of death." Various interpretations have been given of the phrase "out of death." By some it is claimed that the petition offered was with reference to Christ's need of strength at that particular moment, lest because of physical weakness and heaviness of soul, He should then and there collapse and not be able to go up to Calvary and die there upon the cross. According to this interpretation, the prayer was answered by immediate strengthening of body and soul. But does this interpretation, true as it may be, in some respects, exhaust the full meaning of the term "out of death." Would not the context in Hebrews indicate that what Christ was praying for was His final and ultimate victory over death—even the death of the cross; that the Father would vindicate Him by making Him victorious over death, and that the Son's petition "was heard" and in response to it the Father delivered Him "out of death," that is, raised Him up from the dead? We think so. If this be the true interpretation, then Christ was ordained to the High Priesthood, which was after the order of Melchisedec, at the time of His resurrection from the dead (cf. 8:4).

Through His suffering and obedience Christ has become the author (or better, cause) of an eternal salvation to all who obey Him. Note—"to all them that obey him"—for if the Captain of our Salvation could not be made perfect without obedience, how can we?

"Eternal" Things in Hebrews.

"Eternal" is one of the characteristic words of this epistle. So we have:

(1) Eternal Salvation, 5:9—a salvation which is final and that has no peril beyond.

(2) Eternal Judgment, 6:2—a judgment which has the character of finality, beyond which there is no appeal, no fear, no hope.

(3) Eternal Redemption, 9:12—not like Israel's redemption which had to be constantly repeated as though its power and virtue faded away, a salvation, the virtue and power of which abides forever.

(4) Eternal Spirit, 9:14—Christ offered Himself through the eternal Spirit. In Christ's sacrifice we see the final revelation of what God is, so that the religion which rests upon that sacrifice rests upon the ultimate truth of the divine nature, and can never be shaken.

(5) Eternal Inheritance, 9:15—not like the earthly Canaan of Israel from which we may be exiled, but the city of the great King, the heavenly Canaan from which God's people go no more out.

(6) Eternal Covenant, 13:20—by the blood of Christ a religious relation is established between God and man which has upon it the stamp of finality. In the death of Christ God has spoken the final word regarding the plan of salvation. He has nothing to reserve.

Another digression for the purpose of exhortation—warning against spiritual dullness, 5:2-6:20.

This digression takes the form of reproof and warning. The readers are reproved for their dullness in spiritual matters, and warned of the awful danger of such a condition. They are too well satisfied with resting in the knowledge of the simpler truths of the gospel, instead of craving for a larger grasp of the deeper things. Strange, is it not, that the writer does not apologize for the mysteriousness of the subject in question, but rather rebukes his readers for their dullness of spiritual understanding? To continue in that state, to stand still, to lack push and go in spiritual matters means to invite apostasy (6:4-6). Their

standstill in Christian knowledge hindered the writer from speaking to them on a deep, fundamental, instructive, and necessary subject. The types, especially those that are Messianic, should be the constant and diligent study of the Christian. The writer seeks to stimulate his readers to deeper research into the Word, first by warning them (6:4-8), and then by encouraging them (6:7-20). "His warnings are terrible, his consolations are inspiring; but they are all directed to the one aim of moving his readers out of infantile weakness into manly strength."

In this warning the truths or facts of the Christian life are divided into two parts: those truths which have to do with the foundation (6:1, 2), and those which have to do with the structure raised on that foundation (6:4, 5). Is not the process of backsliding and apostasy revealed here? First, we lose our hold on the first series, and then question, and finally deny, the second. When we lose faith in the fundamentals we soon forget the knowledge and power of the remaining facts. The awfulness of the apostasy lies not only in the fact that we are crucifying the Son of God afresh, but also that we not only once believed what we now deny, but that we also knew better than to deny the things we now have come to believe and which are contrary to the gospel of the Son of God.

A note of encouragement, however, is struck in 6:9-12; which, in turn is buttressed by the remembrance of God's dealings with Abraham (6:13-15). If, as is true, Abraham became a settled believer even after a period of wavering, so the writer hopes it will be in the case of these Jewish Christians. Further, God Himself is interested in their perseverance (6:16-18).

These thoughts lead the writer to burst forth into a wonderful expression of hope, which so captivates him that, seemingly, he is at a loss for metaphors to de-

scribe so glorious a truth. This great hope is presented to us in a three-fold way:

(1) It is an Asylum to which the soul may flee in time of trouble;
(2) It is an Anchor by which we may be held firm and fast;
(3) It is a Forerunner, it becomes personal now—something or rather some One—even Christ Himself—who has gone before us to prepare a place for us, into which, later we are to follow Him.

The idea of a forerunner is a new one. The Levitical economy knew nothing about it, for no one could follow the high priest into the holy place (vv. 18-20). Hope is a good anchor, but it needs something to grip—so our anchor grips the throne—hence beyond earth, and cannot be torn up by human hurricanes. Under the Law, it was death to go behind the vail; under the Gospel, it is death not to go behind it.

Four main thoughts are contained in this warning: Censure for spiritual immaturity; exhortation to advance in spiritual knowledge; the peril of standing still; encouragement to persevere. A brief outline of these four lines of thought will be helpful.

(1) Censure for spiritual immaturity, 5:11-14.

It is worthy of note that it is not to the depth, mysteriousness or obtuseness of the subject, but to the dullness of their understanding and lack of progress (or push) in spiritual matters that he attributes their failure to understand the Melchizedek priesthood of Christ. This is the third time the writer has touched upon the same subject but has had to leave it in order to exhort because of the spiritual immaturity of his readers. Up to this point the writer has been setting forth those things in the Mosaic economy which were of a somewhat permanent nature but to all of which Christ is eminently superior. Now he will speak of

some deeper things—things which are abolished by reason of the work of Christ. To speak of these things requires maturity of spiritual understanding such as the Hebrew Christians here addressed do not seem to possess. Typology, then, is not a beginner's study, but one that belongs to mature Christian thinking and experience.

(2) Exhortation to advance in the knowledge of spiritual things, 6:1-3.

The fundamental truths of the Gospel must never be forsaken as being at any time unnecessary or vital, but they should be left for progress in Christian truth as the builder leaves the foundation only to erect upon it the superstructure. Any progress the Christian makes must be *in* and not *away from* the truth. The fundamentals must always be remembered and reckoned with in all Christian thinking and doctrinal progress. These fundamental truths are, or should be, settled truths, and ought not to come up constantly for discussion, so as to make way for the learning of advanced truth. Of the fundamentals we ought to be able to say, "We have found the truth," and "abide therein."

(3) The danger of standing still in spiritual matters, 6:4-8.

It is a peril to know the truth at all—if we do not advance in that truth. In reality, there can be no standing still. We are either advancing or going back. To go back, even though almost imperceptibly, leads to final apostasy, unless great and speedy care is exercised.

Baalam (in the Old Testament) and Judas (in the New Testament) are suggestive illustrations of the condition described in these verses. Failure to increase in the knowledge of God and Christ makes one

liable not only to dullness of spiritual apprehension but also to awful apostasy.

There is one word in these verses which we do well not to overlook, for it throws much light upon their interpretation—that word is "seeing" (v. 6), which should be translated "the while" (R.V. margin), or "repeatedly crucifying" (Weymouth). It is impossible to renew anyone to repentance *as long as* he is continually, repeatedly, and persistently refusing to receive the Christ of the Cross as a personal Saviour. This passage shuts out from repentance unto salvation only those who thus continue to wilfully reject Christ. Of course, we need to remember that this letter was written to Hebrew Christians who were in great danger of being led away from faith in the crucified Christ back to the old legal system for salvation.

(4) Encouragement to persevere in the Christian life, 6:9-20.

The fact that these Hebrew Christians had already manifested so much of Christlike character in their daily walk and conversation (cf. 10:32), leads the writer to believe that they will heed his exhortation to advance and thus avoid lapsing into the awful condition of apostasy just described. Such a walk showed the reality of their faith: yet they need the warning. The antidote is "Looking unto Jesus" (6:18-20) who, as their Forerunner, has entered into the presence of God in their behalf. Further, the unchangeable promises and oath of God (6:13-17) should inspire hope within them that they will be kept faithful unto the end.

2. Christ has characteristics which differ from the Aaronic Priests. The Melchizedek priesthood resumed, 7:1-29.

The argument is now resumed from 5:11 where the

writer left it in order to warn against lack of growth in Christian knowledge.

Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedek. Herein lies the superiority of Christ's priesthood. The writer has exhausted the Aaronic priesthood for illustrations to set forth adequately the priesthood of Christ, and yet the picture is incomplete. There is something of superiority yet in Christ for the setting forth of which it is necessary to refer to another priesthood.

We have three references in the Bible to Melchizedek: (1) Historic, Genesis 14:19-20; (2) Prophetic, Psalm 110; (3) Doctrinal, Hebrews, chapters 5-7.

"This chapter might be described as a sermon, divided under three headings, on the text of Psalm 110:4. This division and its significance he proceeds to develop. The chapter opens with a preamble, a statement of the unique phenomena which surround, in the narrative of Genesis, the name and person of Melchizedek. Then, starting from the presupposition, to whose truth the Lord Himself is so abundantly a witness, that the Old Testament is alive everywhere with intimations of the Christ, and remembering that in the Psalm in question a mysterious import is explicitly assigned to Melchizedek, the writer proceeds to his discourse. Its theme is the primacy of the priesthood embodied in Melchizedek over that presented by Aaron, and the bearing of this on the glory of Him who is proclaimed a priest forever after Melchizedek's order. This theme is presented under headings, somewhat as follows: *First* (7:4-14), the one priesthood is greater than the other *in order*. Abraham, bearing the whole Aaaronic heirarchy potentially within him, defers to Melchizedek as to his greater. Hence, among other inferences, the sacred personage who is a priest forever after Melchizedek's order, wholly independent of Levitical limits, must dominate and must supercede the

order of the sons of Aaron with their inferior status and with their transitory lives. *Secondly* (7:15-19), the one priesthood is greater than the other in respect to the *finality,* the permanence, the everlastingness, of the greater Priest and of His office. He is what He is 'forever, on the scale of the power of indissoluble life. As such, He is the Priest not of an introductory and transient 'commandment' but of that 'better hope' which (7:19) has at last 'made perfect' the purpose and the promise, fulfilled the intention of eternal mercy, and brought us, the people of this great covenant, absolutely nigh to God. *Thirdly* (7:20, 21), this second aspect of the supremacy of the greater priesthood is emphasized and solemnized by one further reference to Psalm 110:4. There the Eternal, looking upon the mysterious Partner of His throne, is heard not to promise only but to *vow,* with an oath unalterable as Himself, that the priesthood of 'His Fellow' shall be everlasting. No such solemnity of affirmation attended Aaron's investiture. There is something greater here, and more immediately divine The 'covenant' (v. 22) committed to the administration of one thus sealed with the oath of Heaven must indeed be better, and cannot but be final; the goal of the eternal purpose.

"*Then* (vv. 23-28) the discourse passes into what we may call its epilogue. The thought recurs to the sublime contrast between the pathetic numerousness of the successors of Aaron, 'not suffered to continue by reason of death,' and the singleness, the 'unsuccessional' identity forever, of the true Melchizedek, who abides eternally. And then, moving to its end, the argument glows and brightens into an application to the human heart. We have in JESUS (the Name has now already been pronounced, 7:22) a Friend, an Intercessor, infinitely and forever competent to save us, His true Israel. We have in Him a true High

Priest, supreme in every attribute of holiness and power, and qualified for his work of intercession by that sacrifice of Himself, which is at once solitary and all-sufficient. Behold then the contrast and the conclusion. To a great Dispensation, the preparatory succeeds a greater, the greatest, the other's end and crown. To the weak mortal priesthood of the law, never warranted by the vow of God to abide always in possession, succeeds One who is Priest, and King, and Son, sealed for His office by the irrevocable vow, 'consecrated forevermore.'"

The purpose of this chapter then is to show the necessity of a change in the priesthood because of the inefficiency and insufficiency of the Aaronic priesthood itself, owing to its inability by reason of constant change through the death of the individual priests, to perfect the worshiper. A priesthood indissoluble by death was necessary. Christ was a priest by the power of an indissoluble life. In order to set forth this aspect of Christ's priesthood, it was necessary to leave the analogy derived from the Aaronic priesthood which had both beginning and ending, and to refer to Melchizedek, the king-priest, who, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, with no father or mother (at least not recorded), and no record of ancestry, was made a type of the Son of God—who was and is forever a priest after the order of Melchizedek.

There are many practical lessons to be derived from this section. How much better it is to have one priest than many. How hard it would be for us to be continually opening the book of our lives to one priest after another. One priest, like Eli, might be good and sympathetic; his successors, like Eli's sons, dissolute and hard. How could a timid soul like Hannah open her heart to such men as Eli's sons? All that is done away. We have but one priest now—Jesus

Christ, the Son of God—great, loving, sympathetic. We need no other. No human being dare stand between us and God, none save Jesus only. We have direct access to God now. He is able to continue unto perfection the work He has begun in our souls (7:25, R.V.).

Note the seven-fold eulogy of Christ as our Priest—just such a Priest as we stand in need of (7:26-28). Is He not suited to our needs? He is:

(1) *Holy:* Holy towards God, and full of mercy and loving-kindness towards men.
(2) *Harmless:* Guileless, free from baseness. He is noble, generous, considerate.
(3) *Undefiled:* No spot in his nature or ministrations to bar his intercession in our behalf.
(4) *Separate from sinners:* He is far removed from sinful men, so far as His disposition and conduct is concerned.
(5) *Made higher than the heavens:* Yea, He is far above all "principalities or powers, and every name that is named." No accuser can come so near to the throne as He.
(6) *An efficacious ministry:* His one sacrifice did what the continual sacrifices of the Mosaic economy could not do, namely, take away the sins of the worshiper.
(7) *Absolutely without infirmity:* The law permitted infirm men to be priests. The priest of the Christian dispensation, on the contrary, is a perfect priest—perfect for evermore.
(8) *A heavenly priesthood (8:1-6):* Christ's priesthood is exercised in heaven, a better sphere. He was not in the truest sense of the word a priest while on earth (8:4).

Such a Priest is becoming to us, such we need, and such a Priest *we have*. As such He is:

(1) The Foundation and Goal of a better hope.
(2) The Surety of a better covenant—the one who personally guarantees the fulfillment of the covenant.
(3) The eternal and all-perfect Helper.
(4) The everlasting Representative of all those who enter into communion with God through Him.
(5) The Mediator of the better covenant—the one who negotiates the covenant, and who induces the parties to undertake its obligations.

A SUMMARY (8:1) OF THE QUALITIES OF OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST, (2:14-8:6)

JESUS THE	SON OF GOD
HUMAN QUALIFICATIONS	**DIVINE QUALIFICATIONS**
(1) Taken our nature, 2:14.	(1) Is divine in nature and power, 1:3-14.
(2) Feels our infirmities, 2:17, 18.	(2) Passed through the heavens, 4:14.
(3) Experienced our temptations, 4:15.	(3) Taken the place on the throne, 4:16.
(4) Suffered tears, agony, death, 2:14; 5:7.	(4) Appeared before face of God, 9:24.
(5) Sympathetic forbearance, 5:2.	(5) Son of God, 5:5.
(6) Knows submission to the will of God, 5:7.	(6) All this unchangeably and forever, 6:20; 7:24, 25.
(7) Offered the sacrifice of Himself, 7:27.	(7) Perfect, sinless, 7:26.

Such a great High Priest is Jesus, the Son of God. Is He not worthy of our confidence? Is He not well fitted and able to do for us all that He has promised—especially to fulfill the promise of "rest" (c. 4). Such a High Priest we have.

III. CHRISTIANITY HAS A BETTER COVENANT THAN JUDAISM, 8:6-10:18.

So far we have had a better *Mediator*, (through whom Christianity came), a better *Priest* (by whom it was executed), now we have a better *Covenant* (in which it is described).

The superior excellency of Christ's work in connection with the New Covenant is seen in the fact that while the Aaronic priests ministered in earthly sanctuaries, which are but types and shadows of the true, Christ, our great High Priest ministers in the upper, true, and heavenly sanctuary in the immediate presence of God. He is, therefore, connected with a better

Covenant than that which God had made with the Jewish people, insomuch that while the Old Covenant gave only symbolical purification, the New Covenant gives a real and actual purification, cleansing both heart and conscience.

This section may be divided as follows:

1. The promise of a New Covenant was an indication that the Old one was imperfect and incomplete, 8:6-13.

Note:
(1) The Sphere of Christ's priesthood is better: it is heavenly, not earthly, 8:1-6.
(2) The Covenant is better: it is spiritual, not carnal, 8:7-13. (Continued in chapter 9.)
(3) The Sanctuary is better: it is heavenly, not earthly, 9:1-14.
(4) The Service is better: it is spiritual, not carnal, 9:15-28.

2. The Old Covenant did not afford real access to God; the New Covenant does grant free and unlimited access, 9:1-12.

The Old Covenant while imperfect was yet valuable because of its typical teaching. Special emphasis is here laid upon the ceremony that took place in the outer tent—the Holy Place—rather than on that of the Most Holy Place, because the outer tent more fitly represented the dispensation of law. So long as the outer tent and its typical service existed, the way into the Holy of Holies was barred. The writer shows us that the outer tent with its typical services is now done away, its lessons and types having been fulfilled by the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, our great High Priest, who has made continual, daily, and direct access to God possible to every believer.

3. The sacrifices of the Old Covenant, although many, were not able to or sufficient to take away sin, but Christ's one offering does effectively and forever remove sin, 9:13-10:18.

The sacrificial work of the Levitical high priest is set forth in a four-fold manner:

(1) The offering of sacrifices—Atonement.
(2) Presentation of the blood in the Holy Place—Advocacy.
(3) Entrance into the Holiest—Access.
(4) Exit from the Holiest—Advent.

CHRIST HAS ACCOMPLISHED THIS FOUR-FOLD WORK FOR US

(1) He offered the sacrifice of Himself and thus made Atonement.
(2) He presented the blood before the throne, and thus became our Advocate.
(3) He entered heaven in our behalf and as our Forerunner, and thus procured Access to God for us.
(4) He will come again without sin unto salvation—His second Advent.

THREE APPEARINGS

(1) He *did* appear, 9:26.
(2) He *does* appear, 9:24.
(3) He *will* appear, 9:28.

Note the emphasis here laid upon the single offering of Christ as completely settling the question of sin (cf. 10:10, 12, 14, 18). It is remarkable that this fact should be four times repeated in the conclusion of the doctrinal and argumentative part of the epistle. No further offering for sin is required (10:26, R.V.).

B. PRACTICAL DEDUCTIONS FROM THE THEME DISCUSSED, 10:19-12:25.

Introductory, 10:19-39.

These verses contain in germ the main thoughts composing the practical part of the epistle. Verses 22, 23 and 24 especially, dealing as they do with faith (22), hope (23, R.V.), and love (24), the trinity of graces, forming the basis of the exhortation in the three remaining chapters: faith (c. 11), hope (c. 12), love (c. 13).

The prevailing characteristic of the exhortations of the epistle (see p. 6) is prominent here: "having"

.... "let us." The idea is this: Seeing that *we have* such priceless possessions and inheritance (cc. 1-10), *let us* enter into the possession and enjoyment of them (cc. 11-13).

Our possessions are described,

(1) Freedom of access by reason of the shed blood of Christ, 10:19, 20.
We may be free in our speech before God now. The thought of freedom of access and boldness of speech has been mentioned before (4:16), but not in connection with the blood of Christ for the reason that the writer had not yet dealt with the sacrifice of Christ.

(2) Right of constant appeal to God because our great Priest is there in our behalf (10:2).
Note—not "a great *high* priest," as in 4:14-16, because the high priest went into the Holy Place only once a year, but "a great priest" because the ordinary priest ministered *daily*, and we need daily to come to the throne of God.

On the basis of these two great facts we are exhorted to exercise the three virtues named above: *Faith*, by drawing near (22); *hope*, by holding fast (23); *love*, by considering the brethren (24) and not forsaking their company (25).

We are justified individually, we are sanctified collectively. Note that failure to attend public worship is followed closely by apostasy (25-27).

We should not overlook the three things especially emphasized in these verses (10:19-29):

(1) Our possessions—what we have (19-21).
(2) The exhortation to possess our possessions (22-25).
(3) The peril of neglecting to possess our possessions (26-28).

A final exhortation concluding the doctrinal discussion, 10:26-39.

Note the similarity between the warning against apostasy in these verses and that of 6:4-8. Failure

to live up to the light we have usually ends in direful apostasy and fearful doom (26-29).

Note also the comforting and encouraging word in connection with this warning (10:9, 32) as with that of 6:4-8.

The Mosaic Economy while inferior to the Christian (as set forth in cc. 8-10:6) cannot be disregarded or disobeyed without the infliction of severe penalty (10:26-31).

The "wilfully" sinning of 10:26 is to be understood as a complete, intelligent, deliberate repudiation of Christ's redemptive work on the cross—counting that death as the death of an ordinary man ("a common thing," 10:29, R.V. margin) rather than a death set apart ("sanctified") by God for the redemption of the race. If one rejects the atonement, there is "no more a," or better, "no other sacrifice for sin" (10:26, R.V.). To reject the atonement is to insult the Holy Spirit (10:29)—and this attitude, if persisted in, leads to, and includes, if it does not really constitute, the sin against the Holy Ghost, for which there is no forgiveness (Matt. 12:31, 32; Mark 3:29, 30). That we may not fall into this awful condition, we must exercise faith. In the next chapter (11) the faith here required is described.

Note that the phrase "the just (or righteous) shall live by faith" is recorded three times in the New Testament.

(1) Romans 1:17—in which the emphasis is put upon the "just," answering the question, Who is the righteous man?
(2) Galatians 3:11—in which the emphasis is put upon "faith," answering the question, How does the just one live?
(3) Hebrews 10:38—in which the emphasis is put upon "live," answering the question, What is it the just man does by his faith?

In our text the faith described is that by which we

live. This fact should help us in our understanding of the eleventh chapter—the great chapter on "Faith."

I. EXHORTATION TO PRACTICE THE LIFE OF FAITH, 11:1-40.

1. Description of Faith, 11:1-3.

There has been much discussion as to whether verses 1-3 give us a definition or a description of faith. It appears from the contents of the whole chapter that the writer's purpose is not so much to define or analyze this great Christian virtue as to set before us the primary place it occupies as a dynamic force in living a life that is well-pleasing to God. In the phrase "Knowledge is power" we are not to understand that "knowledge" is defined by the word "power," but rather that "power" expresses the great advantages which accrue from knowledge. So is it here with faith. It is the activity of faith that is set forth, not so much, if at all, its essential nature. Some have thought that 11:1-3 show us what faith *is*, and 11:4-40 what faith *does*. There is truth in both theories. We have in this chapter a description of faith—faith expressed (1-3); a delineation of faith—faith experienced and illustrated.

What is Faith?

Faith as set forth here, is composed of two elements: Dispositional — It is a disposition to believe what appears to be true on the ground of the evidence submitted; Volitional—A committal of oneself to act upon the conviction which is the result of the evidence submitted.

Both these elements are necessary to the faith here described. The elders mentioned in this chapter so believed. A person may have Dispositional faith, but that faith would be a *dead* faith. It is only when faith

becomes Volitional that it becomes a living vital force. We must *act* upon our *conviction* ere we have true faith.

Belief and Faith.

There is a difference between belief and faith. Belief is the acceptance of a thing or fact as being true; faith is acting upon that truth. Belief lives in books, in the intellect, in the study; faith lives in the streets, in the heart, in practical life. Faith takes belief as a basis and works upon it. It is one thing to say: "I believe the promises of God to be absolutely true and genuine," and an altogether different thing to step out upon those promises, thereby giving substance to things unseen and seemingly intangible, and manifesting conviction in things which are above and sometimes apparently contradictory to mere human reason.

Faith is putting God to the test. The "elders" *tested* God, and God *attested* them, i. e., bore witness to them (11:3). They read or heard the promise or command of God, and at once stepped out upon it. This is true of all the illustrations given in this wonderful chapter.

2. **Faith illustrated, experienced, delineated, 11:4-40.**

a) 11:4-7. Abel worshipped by faith.
Enoch walked by faith.
Noah worked by faith.

b) 11:8-21. The Patriarchs lived by faith:
(1) Abraham and Sarah (8-12, 17-19).
Parenthetical—descriptive of faith of these five witnesses (13-16).
(2) Isaac (20).
(3) Jacob (21).

c) 11:22. Joseph's faith in connection with his death.

Note: So far we have faith before life (11, 12), faith during life (4-19), faith in death (22), and faith to raise from the dead (19).

d) 11:23-28. Moses' faith.

e) 11:29-31. Faith in God's promises.

f) 11:32-40. The wonderful accomplishments of faith:

(1) What faith did (32-35).
(2) What faith bore (36-38).
(3) What faith expected (39-40).

II. EXHORTATIONS TO PURSUE THE HOPE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE, 12:1-29.

This chapter may be divided as follows:

1. Exhortation to pursue the life of faith which they have begun, 12:1, 2.

Two prominent thoughts are presented in this connection:

a) Encouragements to pursue the life of faith.

They are two: The witnesses of the Old Testament, and our Lord Jesus Christ. A question arises here: Are these "witnesses" to be understood as being witnesses to the race we are running, or witnesses to the reality of the life of faith which is here enjoined upon us? Both interpretations are helpful and in harmony with the text, but the latter thought, namely, that the Old Testament worthies mentioned in the eleventh chapter are witnesses to the reality and worth of the life of faith, is doubtless the preferred and correct meaning. The idea of the Greek games is assuredly here, and gives weight to the thought of the witnesses as viewing a race, but the context (chapter 11), as well as the fact that the readers are exhorted to look away from these witnesses and unto Jesus, who is the file leader of faith, gives most weight to the other thought.

b) Impediments of the life of faith.

They are of two kinds: "weights" and "sins." "Weights" may refer to things that are not necessarily sinful in themselves (Rom. 14:20-23), but which hinder our progress in the life of faith. The "sin that doth so easily beset" has been given various meanings, so that it may mean one thing to one person and a different thing to another person. A careful reading of the context, however, seems to give preponderance to that interpretation which has to do with the sin of *unbelief*, both with reference to Christ (John 16:6-9), and to that faith which is an essential element in the life well-pleasing to God (11:6). Indeed, the whole epistle is one great plea for a life of faith and a forsaking of unbelief (cf. 3:12; 4:2, 3; 10:22, 23). It has been thought that because the sin here mentioned is a sin "admired by many" (so rendered by some scholars) and because many seem to be proud of the fact that they "have doubts of the deity of Christ," and this doubt is looked upon as a mark of scholarship, and admired—which is true, practically, of no other sin,—therefore, the "easily besetting sin" is the rejection of Christ. The colored preacher may have been as near the truth as anybody when he misread the text and called this sin the "upsetting" sin. Whatever of the flesh clings so closely to the believer as to entangle him in the Christian race and hinder his progress in grace, that to him is the sin that doth cleave so closely—the "besetting" sin.

2. Suffering compatible with the life of faith and hope.

These Hebrew Christians were living in times of peril and persecution, and were in great danger of apostasy because of the suffering incurred by their faith. Why should they suffer? Were they bigots

suffering for error? If they were obeying the truth, why should they suffer? Is suffering a necessary accompaniment of loyalty to truth? The writer in the following verses, shows the place of suffering in the life of faith. This he does—

a) By directing their attention to the Son of God, the great exemplar of faith, 12:3, 4.

How he suffered—loneliness, trial, persecution, death, even the death of the cross! But to Him, suffering was not only necessary to perfection (5:7), but also a means by which he inherited the glory (v. 3). If the Master suffered, why strange if the servant likewise (John 15:15-22)?

b) By showing the place and purpose of suffering in the life of the believer, 12:5-12.

All suffering is not the direct result of sin committed on the part of the one suffering (cf. John 9:1-4), nor is it necessarily a mark of God's displeasure regarding the person afflicted (Job 1 and 2), for, as our text teaches, it may be the loving chastisement of our heavenly Father who loves us. Sometimes suffering is the result of sin committed on the part of the individual afflicted (cf. John 5:14; 1 Cor. 11:29-33; 5:5). Again, our very loyalty to God and truth incurs suffering (Matt. 5:12; 1 Peter 2:15-22; John 15:18-24). But whatever may be the cause of suffering, the right-minded, thoughtful, intelligent believer will be "exercised" thereby in order that he may become "a partaker of God's holiness."

c) By setting forth the opportunities for helpful ministry created by suffering, 12:13-17.

Not to recognize such opportunities is not only to fail in doing good, but also to invite selfishness and hardness of heart, and will bring ruin in its trail. Had

Jacob had the right feeling of sympathy for his brother Esau in his time of physical weariness, he would have helped him and not taken advantage of him by robbing him of his birthright. Esau's weakness should have moved Jacob to sympathy, and thus saved the blessing for Esau. Our failure to help others in time of need may lead them to complete discouragement and apostasy. Let us be careful in this regard. We must not only "consider Him" (Christ, 3:1); we are in duty bound to "consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works" (10:24). One unfaithful or erring brother can do a great deal of harm to the cause of Christ, both in the Church and the world (cf. Deut. 29:18; Josh. 7)—"the many may thereby be defiled" (12:16).

The reference to Esau's agony must not be construed so as to refer to a sinner's agony in finding that he cannot turn unto God and find forgiveness. The "repentance" which Esau sought "with tears" is not repentance unto salvation, not a change of attitude on the part of God towards the sinner or the sinner towards God, but a change of mind on the part of Isaac towards his son Esau.

3. The Christian's outlook and reward—Zion and Sinai, 12:18-24.

Here are set forth in striking contrast the ultimate of the Law—Sinai with its gloom, darkness, burning terrors; and Zion, the ultimate of the Gospel—Zion resplendent with heavenly glory, gladness, and eternal felicity; no darkness, and no death; all is light and life; it is the homeland of the redeemed, of those whom "we have loved long since and lost awhile"; that "cloud of witnesses" has now become a triumphant, crowned throng—the names of all these, together with those of all the saints, are enrolled there.

4. Warning not to disobey the heavenly voice—the message of the New Covenant, 12:25-29.

The penalty for disobedience to the New Covenant is much more severe than that administered for the transgression under the Covenant of Law. This passage (12:25) answers the question asked in 2:3, "How shall we escape?" The voice that once shook the desert will again shake, not the desert only, but also the heavens and the earth. Then, in that day, the eternal things, the things incapable of being moved—the things that belong to our eternal salvation, which the eternal Son, through the eternal Spirit hath secured for us, as well as the believers themselves (1 John 2:15-17), shall be established forever.

This being so, the believer should persevere and rejoice in the life of faith into which he has been called, even though it should be amid much striving and persecution. We must "take grace" that will enable us thus to live godly, ever remembering that our God, who is love, is also "a consuming fire."

III. EXHORTATION TO PRACTICE THE VIRTUES OF THE LIFE OF FAITH, ESPECIALLY THAT OF LOVE, 13:1-25.

1. The exhortation to practice loving hospitality, 13:1-4.

a) To the brethren, v. 1.
b) To the stranger, v. 2.
c) To the prisoner, v. 3.

2. Avoid covetousness by trust in the Heavenly Father, 13:5, 6.

3. Loving regard for teachers and leaders, 13:7, 8, 16-18.

We should
a) Be mindful of them.
b) Yield and submit to them.

c) Honor them.
d) Imitate them.

In this connection, the Hebrew Christians are warned to avoid the false teachers who reject Christ and His redemptive work. They are not of the same fellowship (13:9-14). Their offering is not our offering. We are called upon now to offer our sacrifices of praise unto His worthy name. There are three sacrifices which Christians are called upon to make:

(1) Of their persons, Rom. 12:1.
(2) Of their purses, Heb. 13:16.
(3) Of their praises, Heb. 13:15.

4. The closing prayer, 13:20, 21.*

(1) Life's highest purpose—to do His will.
(2) Life's greatest need—make you perfect.
(3) Life's perfect provision—working within you.
(4) Life's glorious assurance—God of peace.
(5) Life's adequate guarantee—the resurrection.
(6) Life's simple gift—through Jesus Christ.
(7) Life's complete realization—in the glory forever.

5. Concluding Words, 13:22-25.

* W. H. Griffith Thomas, D. D.

MALACHI

The Seal and End of the Prophets

THE PROPHET

Name—My messenger (1:1; 2:7; 3:1). Some think the name is simply a symbol, or designation of office (as in 3:1), hence they ascribe authorship to Ezra, or Zechariah (cf. Zech. 9:1; 12:1 with Mal. 1:1, and note word "burden"). But a real person could have a symbolic name (Isa. 8:18). The names introducing other prophecies are admittedly proper names of persons: why not this?

Nothing known of his genealogy or place of birth; but this does not imply impersonality. Habakkuk and Obadiah are persons, unquestionably, yet nothing is said of their genealogy. It was the usual custom of the prophets to state their names for the creditibility of contemporaries and the approval of God.

THE TIMES OF THE PROPHET

About B. C. 420—Post-exile.

Politically: Times of Persian supremacy; Judah a Persian province under a governor (1:8; cf. Neh. 5:14); hopes of political independence crushed by Persian victories. Same conditions as during the times of Ezra and Nehemiah. Prophecy probably delivered between Neh. 12 and 13—between Nehemiah's first and second visit to Jerusalem.

Socially and Morally: Class distinctions; intermarriage with heathen nations (2:11-13); the poor oppressed by the rich (3:1-5); the wicked apparently in the ascendancy (3:13-16); divorces frequent (2:10-16); injustice, lawlessness, deceit, treachery, false swearing (2:10 to 3:5). Same condition as in Nehemiah's time (cf. 1:12, 13 with Neh. 13:4, 5; 2:15, 16

with Neh. 13:23, 27; 2:11 with Neh. 13:23; 2:8 with Neh. 13:29; 3:10-16 with Neh. 13:23, 28; 3:8, 10 with Neh. 13:10-12). Disappointed in non-realization of the prophetic predictions of glory (Isaiah to Haggai), hence they doubted the providence, justice, holiness of God; wide-spread scepticism (2:17 to 3:6); Temple services, sacrifices, priesthood—all defiled and profaned (1:10, 6; 2:9; 3:1-10); insensitiveness to the requirements of spiritual service (1:7-11).

THE MESSAGE OF THE PROPHET

Its Method: A charge preferred, an objection assumed, the objection answered (cf. 1:2, 3; 1:7, 8; 2:17; 3:8-10). A form of dialogue between God and the people.

Its General Character: Reproof. "A burden" (cf. Zech. 9:1, 12:1; hence it is thought that Malachi is a continuation of Zechariah's prophecy, being the third "burden"). It undertakes a religious reformation, aimed particularly at the religious orders of the day.

ANALYSIS

Introduction, 1:1-5:

1. Inscription, 1:1.
2. Jehovah's love for Israel; its vindication, its abuse; used as a basis for following reproof, 1:2-5.

I. TEMPLE ABUSES, 1:6-14.

1. Polluted offerings, 1:6-9.
2. Mercenary service, 1:10, 11.
3. Worthless worship, 1:12-14.

II. PRIESTLY CORRUPTIONS, 2:1-9.

1. False priests and their punishment, 2:1-4.
2. True priests and their reward, 2:5-9.

III. UNGODLY MARRIAGES, 2:10-16.

1. The sin in divorce and remarriage, 2:10-13.
2. God's purpose in true marriage, 2:14-16.

IV. PREVAILING SCEPTICISM, 2:17 to 3:6.

1. The scepticism expressed, 2:17.
2. God's answer, 3:1-6.

a) Will punish sin both now and hereafter, 3:1-3.

b) Division between righteous and sinners will surely be made, 3:4-6.

V. TITHES WITHHELD, 3:7-12.

1. Spiritual robbery, 3:7-9.
2. Blessing through repentance, 3:10-12.

VI. CRITICISM AND MURMURING, 3:13 to 4:3.

1. "It is idle to serve God—the wicked prosper," 3:14, 15.
2. God's ways vindicated—

a) In remembering the godly now, 3:16.

b) In finally separating them from the ungodly and rewarding them, 3:17 to 4:3.

Conclusion, 4:4-6:

Deliverance to be found only in reformation. Messianic announcement.

THE LESSONS OF THE BOOK

1. God's love for His people is quenchless (1:2).

2. Judgment will surely follow sin (3:2-6).

3. Hope in the darkest day (4:2).

4. True repentance manifests itself in turning away from sin (2:13).

5. God puts a difference between the righteous and unrighteous (3:16-18).

6. Sin delays the fulfilment of God's promises (Isa. 59:1, 2).

7. Sin the root of scepticism (2:17 to 3:6).

8. Obedience is the sure path to blessedness 3:12, 17).

9. A question for all—"Is my name written in God's Book?" (3:16; Luke 10:20; Rev. 20:15).

THE REVELATION

This is probably the book which of all the books of the New Testament is least read. The reason presumably is because the average Christian has, erroneously, of course, settled down to the conviction that it was never intended that we should understand it. This is a mistake, as its title clearly indicates.

THE TITLE OF THE BOOK

1. It is called, in our English Authorized Version, "The Revelation of St. John the Divine." In the Greek it is called "The Apocalypse." Indeed, it is often referred to in the English tongue under the same title.

2. It is *the* Revelation, the record of *one* revelation given to the apostle John. Very often it is incorrectly referred to as the Book of Revelation*s*. It is singular, and not plural.

3. Then it is a *revelation*. Many people have an idea that it is a mystery. The book is not intended to be a mystery in the sense in which we use that word. It is true that it deals largely with future things which must always be dark to us; and it is also true that it speaks to us concerning these future things in dark figures of speech, in parable, and in symbol—in language altogether different from that of any other part of the New Testament. Yet, notwithstanding all this, the book is not designed to be unintelligible. Indeed, on the contrary, the writer seems to take it for granted that those to whom he wrote were thoroughly familiar with his peculiar modes of speech, and obviously expected that the truths he intended to convey, so far from being obscured by his style, would be thereby

illustrated, enforced, and brought home to the mind with more than ordinary power.

The symbolism of the Apocalypse is not altogether new, nor is it peculiar to this particular book. The diligent student of the Scriptures has met it before. For example: The dress, the posture of the Christ, and the candlesticks described in chapter 1 are taken from the dress of the high-priest, and the holy place of the Temple. The four living creatures of chapter 4 we have already become acquainted with in the Pentateuch and Ezekiel. The beast of chapter 13 is the same as that of Daniel 7. The harvest of chapter 14 we have read of before in Joel 3 and Zechariah 14. The world-wide conflict of chapter 19 has been referred to already in Matthew 24. It is said that of the 404 verses in the Book of Revelation, 205 contain Old Testament language, while there are about 1,500 references to the Old Testament in the book. To know the full mind of the Spirit, as revealed in the Revelation, we therefore, must be well acquainted with the Old Testament. Particularly is Revelation bound up with the Book of Daniel and the Olivet discourse of our Lord.

The word "revelation" means the uncovering of that which has been previously hidden, the drawing back of a veil that has hung over a person or thing, the laying bare of what has hitherto been concealed. It means the unveiling of something hidden, which gives light to those beholding it. It implies the removal of the cover from anything; unveiling it. It is said of Baalam (Num. 22:31) that the Lord opened his eyes so that he was able to see things he had not seen before.

The Book of Revelation, then, is the unveiling of divine mysteries.

4. It is the revelation of *Jesus Christ*. Not the

"manifestation"—which word, when used in the Bible, refers to the manifestation of persons rather than things, nor "disclosure" of Jesus Christ Himself; but the revelation *given by Him;* an unveiling of that of which He is the Author and Source. What other person could impart a revelation so true, so weighty, so important, and so precious?

5. It is a revelation which *God* gave Him. All things go back to God. In the beginning, God. He is the eternal and unchangeable One, who holds the hearts of men and the destinies of the nations in the hollow of His hand, and can turn them whither He will. It is the revelation given by Him "who spake and it was done, who commanded, and it stood fast"; whose thoughts are unchangeable, and whose ways are past finding out.

6. It is a revelation of *things which must shortly come to pass.* Thus it has all the interest of the present, as well as the glory and anticipation of the distant future.

THE AIM OF THE BOOK

The views on this subject are many and diverse. But no matter whether we view the aim of the book as predicting or describing (or both) the demolition of paganism, the downfall of papal Rome, and the final destruction of some future Antichrist, expositors of every school will admit that *the grand and great theme of the Apocalypse is the personal coming of the Lord at His second Advent in glory, to bring in the consummation of all things.* This is the great and consoling thought held out in this book for the Christian. It is the subject which introduces the book (Prologue, 1:7), and which closes the book (Epilogue, 22:20).

Two words may be used to convey the two prevalent

opinions regarding the contents of this book: they are *"descriptive,"* and *"predictive";* the former word indicating that the book contains a descriptive account of what has *already taken place;* the latter, pointing to events *yet to occur.* It is our opinion that the contents of the book are broad and deep enough to *include both words.* The Book of Revelation is both *"descriptive"* and *"predictive."* It is both history and prophecy. It is prophecy based on history. It is historico-prophetical.

The Book of Revelation is a portrayal of the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, His dealings with the chosen people, and with the great enemies of unrighteousness. It presents also a description of the manifestation of the new creation and the transformation of the world, which is brought about by a series of great conflicts and triumphs of Christ over Antichrist and the world. The narration of this new work of creation opens with the Sabbath of redemption (hence the prophet has his vision on the Lord's Day) and extends to the eternal Sabbath of final completion. Accordingly we have the sacred number 7 seven times repeated: the 7 churches, 7 seals, 7 trumpets, 7 thunders, 7 vials, 7 heads of Antichrist. At the close we have the 7 manifestations of the Spirit of God who, throughout, has guided the struggle (chap. 1), in the appearance of Christ and the transformation of the world; a new *Genesis,* by which the Bible at its conclusion points back to its commencement, showing how final and perfect a fulfillment has been obtained. Thus we see the Bible to be a perfect whole: It has a beginning, a middle, and an end. Genesis announces the beginning of all things; Revelation declares the end and destiny of all things.

CONTENTS—HOW TO VIEW THEM

There is a *past*, a *present*, and a *future* in this book (1:19).

1. Past.

"The things which thou hast seen." Chapter 1.

This chapter deals with the person and glory of the Christ, who gives the revelation. This chapter may be styled the *Christophany*, or, the Manifestation of the Person of Christ.

2. Present.

"The things which are." Chapters 2 and 3.

These chapters deal with the history of the church during all her period upon earth. This is *Ecclesiology*, or the Doctrine of the Church.

3. The Future.

"The things which shall be hereafter." Chapters 4:1 to 22:5.

The events of these chapters doubtless refer to the period of time elapsing between the rapture,—the time when the Church is caught up to meet the Lord in the air,—and the establishment of the new earth and the new heavens wherein dwelleth righteousness. This is *Eschatology*, or the Doctrine of the Last Things.

Here is a suggestive outline of the book.

I. Introduction and Prologue, 1.
II. Letters to the Seven Churches, 2, 3.
III. The Great Conflict and Tribulation, 4-20.
IV. The New Heaven and Earth, 21-22:5.
V. Epilogue, 22:6-21.

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